

SAINT PAULS.

DECEMBER, 1871.

WILFRID CUMBERMEDE.

An Autobiographical Story.

By GEORGE MAC DONALD, AUTHOR OF "ALEC FORBES," ETC.

CHAPTER LV.

ATTEMPTS AND COINCIDENCES.

It was months before I could resume my work. Not until Charley's absence was as it were so far established and accepted that hope had begun to assert itself against memory; that is, not until the form of Charley ceased to wander with despairful visage behind me and began to rise amongst the silvery mists before me, was I able to invent once more, or even to guide the pen with certainty over the paper. The moment however that I took the pen in my hand another necessity seized me.

Although Mary had hardly been out of my thoughts, I had heard no word of her since her brother's death. I dared not write to her father or mother after the way the former had behaved to me, and I shrunk from approaching Mary with a word that might suggest a desire to intrude the thoughts of myself upon the sacredness of her grief. Why should she think of me? Sorrow has ever something of a divine majesty, before which one must draw nigh with bowed head and bated breath:

Here I and sorrows sit;

Here is my throne: bid kings come bow to it.

But the moment I took the pen in my hand to write, an almost agonizing desire to speak to her laid hold of me. I dared not yet write to her, but, after reflection, resolved to send her some verses which should make her think of both Charley and myself, through the pages of a magazine which I knew she read.

O look not on the heart I bring—
It is too low and poor;
I would not have thee love a thing
Which I can ill endure.

Nor love me for the sake of what
I would be if I could;
O'er peaks as o'er the marshy flat,
Still soars the sky of good.

See, love, afar, the heavenly man
The will of God would make;
The thing I must be when I can,
Love now, for faith's dear sake.

But when I had finished the lines, I found the expression had fallen so far short of what I had in my feeling, that I could not rest satisfied with such an attempt at communication. I walked up and down the room thinking of the awful theories regarding the state of mind at death in which Mary had been trained. As to the mere suicide, love ever finds refuge in presumed madness; but all of her school believed that at the moment of dissolution the fate is eternally fixed either for bliss or woe, determined by the one or the other of two vaguely defined attitudes of the mental being towards certain propositions; concerning which attitudes they were at least right in asserting that no man could of himself assume the safe one. The thought became unendurable that Mary should believe that Charley was damned—and that for ever and ever. I must and would write to her, come of it what might. That my Charley, whose suicide came of misery that the painful flutterings of his half-born wings would not bear him aloft into the empyrean, should appear to my Athanasia lost in an abyss of irrecoverable woe; that she should think of God as sending forth his spirit to sustain endless wickedness for endless torture;—it was too frightful. As I wrote, the fire burned and burned, and I ended only from despair of utterance. Not a word can I now recall of what I wrote:—the strength of my feelings must have paralyzed the grasp of my memory. All I can recollect is that I closed with the expression of a passionate hope that the God who had made me and my Charley to love each other, would somewhere, some day, somehow, when each was grown stronger and purer, give us once more to each other. In that hope alone, I said, was it possible for me to live. By return of post, I received the following—

“SIR,

“After having everlastingly ruined one of my children, body and soul, for *your* sophisms will hardly alter the decrees of divine justice, —once more you lay your snares—now to drag my sole remaining child into the same abyss of perdition. Such wickedness—wickedness even to the pitch of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, I have

never in the course of a large experience of impenitence found paralleled. It almost drives me to the belief that the enemy of souls is still occasionally permitted to take up his personal abode in the heart of him who wilfully turns aside from revealed truth. I forgive you for the ruin you have brought upon our fondest hopes, and the agony with which you have torn the hearts of those who more than life loved him of whom you falsely called yourself the friend. But I fear you have already gone too far ever to feel your need of that forgiveness which alone can avail you. Yet I say—Repent, for the mercy of the Lord is infinite. Though my boy is lost to me for ever, I should yet rejoice to see the instrument of his ruin plucked as a brand from the burning.

“Your obedient well-wisher,

“CHARLES OSBORNE.

“P.S.—I retain your letter for the sake of my less experienced brethren, that I may be able to afford an instance of how far the unregenerate mind can go in its antagonism to the God of Revelation.”

I breathed a deep breath, and laid the letter down, mainly concerned as to whether Mary had had the chance of reading mine. I could believe any amount of tyranny in her father—even to perusing and withholding her letters; but in this I may do him injustice, for there is no common ground known to me from which to start in speculating upon his probable actions. I wrote in answer something nearly as follows:

“SIR,

“That you should do me injustice can by this time be no matter of surprise to me. Had I the slightest hope of convincing you of the fact, I should strain every mental nerve to that end. But no one can labour without hope, and as in respect of *your* justice I have none, I will be silent. May the God in whom I trust convince you of the cruelty of which you have been guilty; the God in whom you profess to believe, must be too like yourself to give any ground of such hope from him.

“Your obedient servant,

“WILFRID CUMBERMEDE.”

If Mary had read my letter, I felt assured her reading had been very different from her father's. Anyhow she could not judge me as he did, for she knew me better. She knew that for Charley's sake I had tried the harder to believe myself.

But the reproaches of one who had been so unjust to his own son, could not weigh very heavily on me, and I now resumed my work with a tolerable degree of calmness. But I wrote badly. I should

have done better to go down to the Moat, and be silent. If my reader has ever seen what I wrote at that time, I should like her to know that I now wish it all unwritten—not for any utterance contained in it, but simply for its general inferiority.

Certainly work is not always required of a man. There is such a thing as a sacred idleness, the cultivation of which is now fearfully neglected. Abraham, seated in his tent door in the heat of the day, would be to the philosophers of the nineteenth century an object for uplifted hands and pointed fingers. They would see in him only the indolent Arab, whom nothing but the foolish fancy that he saw his Maker in the distance, could rouse to run.

It was clearly better to attempt no further communication with Mary at present; and I could think but of one person from whom, without giving pain, I might hope for some information concerning her.

Here I had written a detailed account of how I contrived to meet Miss Pease, but it is not of consequence enough to my story to be allowed to remain. Suffice it to mention that one morning at length I caught sight of her in a street in Mayfair, where the family was then staying for the season, and overtaking addressed her.

She started, stared at me for a moment, and held out her hand.

"I didn't know you, Mr. Cumbermede. How much older you look! I beg your pardon. Have you been ill?"

She spoke hurriedly, and kept looking over her shoulder now and then as if afraid of being seen talking to me.

"I have had a good deal to make me older since we met last, Miss Pease," I said. "I have hardly a friend left in the world but you—that is, if you will allow me to call you one."

"Certainly, certainly," she answered, but hurriedly, and with one of those uneasy glances. "Only you must allow, Mr. Cumbermede, that—that—that——"

The poor lady was evidently unprepared to meet me on the old footing, and, at the same time, equally unwilling to hurt my feelings.

"I should be sorry to make you run a risk for my sake," I said. "Please just answer me one question. Do you know what it is to be misunderstood—to be despised without deserving it?"

She smiled sadly, and nodded her head gently two or three times.

"Then have pity on me, and let me have a little talk with you."

Again she glanced apprehensively over her shoulder.

"You are afraid of being seen with me, and I don't wonder," I said.

"Mr. Geoffrey came up with us," she answered. "I left him at breakfast. He will be going across the park to his club directly."

"Then come with me the other way—into Hyde Park," I said.

With evident reluctance, she yielded and accompanied me.

As soon as we got within Stanhope Gate, I spoke.

"A certain sad event, of which you have no doubt heard, Miss

Pease, has shut me out from all communication with the family of my friend Charley Osborne. I am very anxious for some news of his sister. She is all that is left of him to me now. Can you tell me anything about her?"

"She has been very ill," she replied.

"I hope that means that she is better," I said.

"She is better, and, I hear, going on the continent, as soon as the season will permit. But, Mr. Cumbermede, you must be aware that I am under considerable restraint in talking to you. The position I hold in Sir Giles's family, although neither a comfortable nor a dignified one——"

"I understand you perfectly, Miss Pease," I returned, "and fully appreciate the sense of propriety which causes your embarrassment. But the request I am about to make has nothing to do with them or their affairs whatever. I only want your promise to let me know if you hear anything of Miss Osborne."

"I cannot tell—what——"

"What use I may be going to make of the information you give me. In a word, you do not trust me."

"I neither trust nor distrust you, Mr. Cumbermede. But I am afraid of being drawn into a correspondence with you."

"Then I will ask no promise. I will hope in your generosity. Here is my address. I pray you, as you would have helped him who fell among thieves, to let me know anything you hear about Mary Osborne."

She took my card, and turned at once, saying,

"Mind, I make no promise."

"I imagine none," I answered. "I will trust in your kindness."

And so we parted.

Unsatisfactory as the interview was, it yet gave me a little hope. I was glad to hear Mary was going abroad, for it must do her good. For me, I would endure and labour and hope. I gave her to God, as Shakspere says somewhere, and set myself to my work. When her mind was quieter about Charley, somehow or other I might come near her again.—I could not see how.

I took my way across the Green Park.

I do not believe we notice the half of the coincidences that float past us on the stream of events. Things which would fill us with astonishment, and probably with foreboding, look us in the face and pass us by, and we know nothing of them.

As I walked along in the direction of the Mall, I became aware of a tall man coming towards me, stooping as if with age, while the length of his stride indicated a more vigorous period. He passed without lifting his head, but in the partial view of the wan and furrowed countenance I could not fail to recognize Charley's father. Such a worn unhappiness was there depicted, that the indignation

which still lingered in my bosom went out in compassion. If his sufferings might but teach him that to brand the truth of the kingdom with the private mark of opinion, must result in persecution and cruelty! He mounted the slope with strides at once eager and aimless, and I wondered whether any of the sure-coming compunctions had yet begun to overshadow the complacency of his faith; whether he had yet begun to doubt if it pleased the Son of Man that a youth should be driven from the gates of truth, because he failed to recognize her image in the faces of the janitors.

Aimless, also, I turned into the Mall, and again I started at the sight of a known figure. Was it possible?—could it be my Lilith betwixt the shafts of a public cabriolet? Fortunately it was empty. I hailed it, and jumped up, telling the driver to take me to my chambers. My poor Lilith! She was working like one who had never been loved! So far as I knew, she had never been in harness before. She was badly groomed and thin, but much of her old spirit remained. I soon entered into negotiations with the driver, whose property she was, and made her my own once more, with a delight I could ill express in plain prose—for my friends were indeed few. I wish I could draw a picture of the lovely creature, when at length, having concluded my bargain, I approached her, and called her by her name! She turned her head sideways towards me with a low whinny of pleasure, and when I walked a little away, walked wearily after me. I took her myself to livery stables near me, and wrote for Styles. His astonishment when he saw her was amusing.

"Good Lord! Miss Lilith!" was all he could say—for some moments.

In a few days she had begun to look like herself, and I sent her home with Styles. I should hardly like to say how much the recovery of her did to restore my spirits: I could not help regarding it as a good omen.

And now, the first bitterness of my misery having died a natural death, I sought again some of the friends I had made through Charley, and experienced from them great kindness. I began also to go into society a little, for I had found that invention is ever ready to lose the forms of life if it be not kept under the ordinary pressure of its atmosphere. As it is, I doubt much if any of my books are more than partially true to those forms, for I have ever heeded them too little; but I believe I have been true to the heart of man. But that heart I have ever regarded more as the fountain of aspiration than the grave of fruition. The discomfiture of enemies and a happy marriage never seemed to me ends of sufficient value to close a history withal—I mean a fictitious history wherein one may set forth joys and sorrows which in a real history must walk shadowed under the veil of modesty; for the soul still less than the body, will consent to be revealed to all eyes. Hence, although most of my

books have seemed true to some, they have all seemed visionary to most.

A year passed away, during which I never left London. I heard from Miss Pease—that Miss Osborne, although much better, was not going to return until after another winter. I wrote and thanked her, and heard no more. It may seem I accepted such ignorance with strange indifference; but even to the reader for whom alone I am writing, I cannot, as things are, attempt to lay open all my heart. I have not written and cannot write how I thought, projected, brooded, and dreamed—all about *her*; how I hoped when I wrote that she might read; how I questioned what I had written, to find whether it would look to her what I had intended it to appear.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE LAST VISION.

I HAD engaged to accompany one of Charley's barrister-friends, in whose society I had found considerable satisfaction, to his father's house—to spend the evening with some friends of the family. The gathering was chiefly for talk, and was a kind of thing I disliked, finding its aimlessness and flicker depressing. Indeed, partly from the peculiar circumstances of my childhood, partly from what I had suffered, I always found my spirits highest when alone. Still, the study of humanity apart, I felt that I ought not to shut myself out from my kind but endure some little irksomeness, if only for the sake of keeping alive that surface friendliness which has its value in the nourishment of the deeper affections. On this particular occasion, however, I yielded the more willingly that, in the revival of various memories of Charley, it had occurred to me that I once heard him say that his sister had a regard for one of the ladies of the family.

There were not many people in the drawing-room when we arrived, and my friend's mother alone was there to entertain them. With her I was chatting when one of her daughters entered, accompanied by a lady in mourning. For one moment I felt as if on the borders of insanity. My brain seemed to surge like the waves of a wind-tormented tide, so that I dared not make a single step forward lest my limbs should disobey me. It was indeed Mary Osborne; but oh, how changed! The rather full face had grown delicate and thin, and the fine pure complexion if possible finer and purer, but certainly more ethereal and evanescent. It was as if suffering had removed some substance unapt,* and rendered her body a better fitting garment for her soul. Her face, which had before required the softening influences of sleep and dreams to give it the plasticity necessary for complete expression, was now full of a repressed expres-

* Spenser's "Hymne in Honour of Beatie."

sion, if I may be allowed the phrase—a latent something ever on the tremble, ever on the point of breaking forth, It was as if the nerves had grown finer, more tremulous, or, rather, more vibrative. Touched to finer issues they could never have been, but suffering had given them a more responsive thrill. In a word she was the Athanasia of my dream, not the Mary Osborne of the Mold-warp library.

Conquering myself at last, and seeing a favourable opportunity, I approached her. I think the fear lest her father should enter, gave me the final impulse; otherwise I could have been contented to gaze on her for hours in motionless silence.

"May I speak to you, Mary?" I said.

She lifted her eyes and her whole face towards mine, without a smile, without a word. Her features remained perfectly still, but, like the outbreak of a fountain, the tears rushed into her eyes and overflowed in silent weeping. Not a sob, not a convulsive movement accompanied their flow.

"Is your father here?" I asked.

She shook her head.

"I thought you were abroad somewhere—I did not know where."

Again she shook her head. She dared not speak, knowing that if she made the attempt she must break down.

"I will go away till you can bear the sight of me," I said.

She half-stretched out a thin white hand, but whether to detain me or bid me farewell I do not know, for it dropped again on her knee.

"I will come to you by and by," I said, and moved away.

The rooms rapidly filled, and in a few minutes I could not see the corner where I had left her. I endured everything for a while, and then made my way back to it; but she was gone, and I could find her nowhere. A lady began to sing. When the applause which followed her performance was over, my friend, who happened to be near me, turned abruptly and said,

"Now, Cumbermede, *you* sing."

The truth was, that since I had loved Mary Osborne, I had attempted to cultivate a certain small gift of song which I thought I possessed. I dared not touch any existent music, for I was certain I should break down; but having a faculty—somewhat thin, I fear—for writing songs, and finding that a shadowy air always accompanied the birth of the words, I had presumed to study music a little, in the hope of becoming able to fix the melody—the twin sister of the song. I had made some progress, and had grown able to write down a simple thought. There was little presumption then, in venturing my voice, limited as was its scope, upon a trifle of my own. Tempted by the opportunity of realizing hopes consciously wild, I obeyed my friend, and, sitting down to the instrument in some trepidation, sang the following verses:—

I dreamed that I woke from a dream,
And the house was full of light;
At the window two angel Sorrows
Held back the curtains of night.

The door was wide, and the house
Was full of the morning wind;
At the door two armed warders
Stood silent, with faces blind.

I ran to the open door,
For the wind of the world was sweet;
The warders with crossing weapons
Turned back my issuing feet.

I ran to the shining windows—
There the winged Sorrows stood;
Silent they held the curtains,
And the light fell through in a flood.

I clomb to the highest window—
Ah! there, with shadowed brow,
Stood one lonely radiant Sorrow,
And that, my love, was thou.

I could not have sung this in public but that no one would suspect it was my own, or was in the least likely to understand a word of it—except her for whose ears and heart it was intended.

As soon as I had finished, I rose and once more went searching for Mary. But as I looked, sadly fearing she was gone, I heard her voice close behind me.

"Are those verses your own, Mr. Cumbermede?" she asked, almost in a whisper.

I turned trembling. Her lovely face was looking up at me.

"Yes," I answered—"as much my own as that I believe they are not to be found anywhere. But they were given to me rather than made by me."

"Would you let me have them? I am not sure that I understand them."

"I am not sure that I understand them myself. They are for the heart rather than the mind. Of course you shall have them. They were written for you. All I have, all I am is yours."

Her face flushed and grew pale again instantly.

"You must not talk so," she said. "Remember."

"I can never forget. I do not know why you say *remember*."

"On second thoughts, I must not have the verses. I beg your pardon."

"Mary, you bewilder me. I have no right to ask you to explain, except that you speak as if I must understand. What have they been telling you about me?"

"Nothing—at least nothing that——"

She paused.

"I try to live innocently, and were it only for your sake, shall never stop searching for the thread of life in its ravelled skein."

"Do not say for *my* sake, Mr. Cumbermede. That means nothing. Say for your own sake if not for God's."

"If *you* are going to turn away from me, I don't mind how soon I follow Charley."

All this was said in a half whisper, I bending towards her where she sat, a little sheltered by one of a pair of folding doors. My heart was like to break—or rather it seemed to have vanished out of me altogether, lost in a gulf of emptiness. Was this all? Was this the end of my dreaming? To be thus pushed aside by the angel of my resurrection?

"Hush! hush!" she said kindly. "You must have many friends. But——"

"But you will be my friend no more? Is that it, Mary? Oh, if you knew all! And you are never never to know it!"

Her still face was once more streaming with tears. I choked mine back, terrified at the thought of being observed; and without even offering my hand, left her and made my way through the crowd to the stair. On the landing I met Geoffrey Brotherton. We stared each other in the face, and passed.

I did not sleep much that night, and when I did sleep, woke from one wretched dream after another, now crying aloud, and now weeping. What could I have done? or rather what could any one have told her I had done to make her behave thus to me? She did not look angry—or even displeased—only sorrowful, very sorrowful; and she seemed to take it for granted I knew what it meant. When at length I finally woke after an hour of less troubled sleep, I found some difficulty in convincing myself that the real occurrences of the night before had not been one of the many troubled dreams that had scared my repose. Even after the dreams had all vanished, and the facts remained, they still appeared more like a dim dream of the dead—the vision of Mary was so wan and hopeless, memory alone looking out from her worn countenance. There had been no warmth in her greeting, no resentment in her aspect; we met as if we had parted but an hour before, only that an open grave was between us, across which we talked in the voices of dreamers. She had sought to raise no barrier between us, just because we *could* not meet, save as one of the dead and one of the living. What could it mean? But with the growing day awoke a little courage. I would at least try to find out what it meant. Surely *all* my dreams were not to vanish like the mist of the morning! To lose my dreams would be far worse than to lose the so-called realities of life. What were these to me? What value lay in such reality? Even God was as yet so dim and far off as to seem rather in the region of dreams—

of those true dreams, I hoped, that shadow forth the real—than in the actual visible present. “Still,” I said to myself, “she had not cast me off; she did not refuse to know me; she did ask for my song, and I will send it.”

I wrote it out, adding a stanza to the verses:—

I bowed my head before her,
And stood trembling in the light;
She dropped the heavy curtain,
And the house was full of night.

I then sought my friend's chambers.

“I was not aware you knew the Osbornes,” I said. “I wonder you never told me, seeing Charley and you were such friends.”

“I never saw one of them till last night. My sister and she knew each other some time ago, and have met again of late. What a lovely creature she is! But what became of you last night? You must have left before any one else.”

“I didn't feel well.”

“You don't look the thing.”

“I confess meeting Miss Osborne rather upset me.”

“It had the same effect on her. She was quite ill, my sister said this morning. No wonder! Poor Charley! I always had a painful feeling that he would come to grief somehow.”

“Let's hope he's come to something else by this time, Marston,” I said.

“Amen,” he returned.

“Is her father or mother with her?”

“No. They are to fetch her away—next week, I think it is.”

I had now no fear of my communication falling into other hands, and therefore sent the song by post, with a note, in which I begged her to let me know if I had done anything to offend her. Next morning I received the following reply.

“No, Wilfrid—for Charley's sake, I must call you by your name—you have done nothing to offend me. Thank you for the song. I did not want you to send it, but I will keep it. You must not write to me again. Do not forget what we used to write about. God's ways are not ours. Your friend, Mary Osborne.”

I rose and went out, not knowing whither. Half-stunned, I roamed the streets. I ate nothing that day, and when towards night I found myself near my chambers, I walked in as I had come out, having no intent, no future. I felt very sick, and threw myself on my bed. There I passed the night, half in sleep, half in a helpless prostration. When I look back, it seems as if some spiritual narcotic must have been given me, else how should the terrible time have passed and left me alive? When I came to myself, I found I was ill, and I longed to hide my head in the nest of my childhood. I had always

looked on the Moat as my refuge at the last ; now it seemed the only desirable thing—a lonely nook, in which to lie down and end the dream there begun—either, as it now seemed, in an eternal sleep, or the inburst of a dreary light. After the last refuge it could afford me it must pass from my hold ; but I was yet able to determine whither. I rose and went to Marston.

“Marston,” I said, “I want to make my will.”

“All right !” he returned ; “but you look as if you meant to register it as well. You’ve got a feverish cold : I see it in your eyes. Come along. I’ll go home with you, and fetch a friend of mine who will give you something to do you good.”

“I can’t rest till I have made my will,” I persisted.

“Well, there’s no harm in that,” he rejoined. “It won’t take long, I dare say.”

“It needn’t anyhow. I only want to leave the small real property I have to Miss Osborne, and the still smaller personal property to yourself.”

He laughed.

“All right, old boy ! I haven’t the slightest objection to your willing your traps to me, but every objection in the world to your *leaving* them. To be sure, every man, with anything to leave, ought to make his will betimes ;—so fire away.”

In a little while the draught was finished.

“I shall have it ready for your signature by to-morrow,” he said.

I insisted it should be done at once. I was going home, I said. He yielded. The will was engrossed, signed, and witnessed, that same morning ; and in the afternoon I set out, the first part of the journey by rail, for the Moat.

CHAPTER LVII.

ANOTHER DREAM.

THE excitement of having something to do, had helped me over the morning, and the pleasure of thinking of what I had done, helped me through half the journey ; but before I reached home, I was utterly exhausted. Then I had to drive round by the farm, and knock up Mrs. Herbert and Styles.

I could not bear the thought of my own room, and ordered a fire in my grandmother’s, where they soon got me into bed. All I remember of that night is the following dream.

I found myself at the entrance of the ice-cave. A burning sun beat on my head, and at my feet flowed the brook which gathered its life from the decay of the ice. I stooped to drink ; but, cool to the eye and hand and lips, it yet burned me within like fire. I would seek shelter from the sun inside the cave. I entered, and knew that the cold was all around me ; I even felt it ; but somehow it did not

enter into me. My brain, my very bones burned with fire. I went in and in. The blue atmosphere closed around me, and the colour entered into my soul till it seemed dyed with the potent blue. My very being swam and floated in a blue atmosphere of its own. My intention—I can recall it perfectly—was but to walk to the end, a few yards, then turn and again brave the sun; for I had a dim feeling of forsaking my work, of playing truant, or of being cowardly in thus avoiding the heat. Something else too was wrong, but I could not clearly tell what. As I went on, I began to wonder that I had not come to the end. The gray walls yet rose about me, and ever the film of dissolution flowed along their glassy faces to the tunnel below; still before me opened the depth of blue atmosphere, deepening as I went. After many windings the path began to branch, and soon I was lost in a labyrinth of passages, of which I knew not why I should choose one rather than another. It was useless now to think of returning. Arbitrarily I chose the narrowest way, and still went on.

A discoloration of the ice attracted my attention, and as I looked it seemed to retreat into the solid mass. There was something not ice within it which grew more and more distinct as I gazed, until at last I plainly distinguished the form of my grandmother, lying as then when my aunt made me touch her face. A few yards further on, lay the body of my uncle, as I saw him in his coffin. His face was dead white in the midst of the cold clear ice, his eyes closed, and his arms straight by his side. He lay like an alabaster king upon his tomb. It was he, I thought, but he would never speak to me more—never look at me—never more awake. There lay all that was left of him—the cold frozen memory of what he had been and would never be again. I did not weep. I only knew somehow in my dream that life was all a wandering in a frozen cave, where the faces of the living were dark with the coming corruption, and the memories of the dead, cold and clear and hopeless evermore, alone were lovely.

I walked further; for the ice might possess yet more of the past—all that was left me of life. And again I stood and gazed, for, deep within, I saw the form of Charley—at rest now, his face bloodless, but not so death-like as my uncle's. His hands were laid palm to palm over his bosom, and pointed upwards as if praying for comfort where comfort was none: here at least were no flickerings of the rainbow fancies of faith and hope and charity! I gazed in comfortless content for a time on the repose of my weary friend, and then went on, inly moved to see what further the ice of the godless region might hold. Nor had I wandered far when I saw the form of Mary, lying like the rest, only that her hands were crossed on her bosom. I stood, wondering to find myself so little moved. But when the ice drew nigh me, and would have closed around me, my heart leaped for joy; and when the heat of my lingering life repelled it, my heart sunk within me, and I said to myself: "Death will not have me. I

may not join her even in the land of cold forgetfulness : I may not even be nothing *with* her." The tears began to flow down my face, like the thin veil of water that kept ever flowing down the face of the ice ; and as I wept, the water before me flowed faster and faster, till it rippled in a sheet down the icy wall. Faster and yet faster it flowed, falling, with the sound as of many showers, into the runnel below, which rushed splashing and gurgling away from the foot of the vanishing wall. Faster and faster it flowed, until the solid mass fell in a foaming cataract, and swept in a torrent across the cave. I followed the retreating wall, through the seething water at its foot. Thinner and thinner grew the dividing mass ; nearer and nearer came the form of my Mary. "I shall yet clasp her," I cried ; "her dead form will kill me, and I too shall be inclosed in the friendly ice. I shall not be with her, alas ; but neither shall I be without her, for I shall depart into the lovely nothingness." Thinner and thinner grew the dividing wall. The skirt of her shroud hung like a wet weed in the falling torrent. I kneeled in the river, and crept nearer, with outstretched arms : when the vanishing ice set the dead form free, it should rest in those arms—the last gift of the life-dream—for then, surely, I *must* die "Let me pass in the agony of a lonely embrace!" I cried. As I spoke she moved. I started to my feet, stung into life by the agony of a new hope. Slowly the ice released her, and gently she rose to her feet. The torrents of water ceased—they had flowed but to set her free. Her eyes were still closed, but she made one blind step towards me, and laid her left hand on my head, her right hand on my heart. Instantly, body and soul, I was cool as a summer eve after a thunder-shower. For a moment, precious as an æon, she held her hands upon me—then slowly opened her eyes. Out of them flashed the living soul of my Athanasia. She closed the lids again slowly over the lovely splendour ; the water in which we stood rose around us ; and on its last billow she floated away through the winding passage of the cave. I sought to follow her, but could not. I cried aloud and awoke.

But the burning heat had left me ; I felt that I had passed a crisis, and had begun to recover—a conviction which would have been altogether unwelcome, but for the poor shadow of a reviving hope which accompanied it. Such a dream, come whence it might, could not but bring comfort with it. The hope grew, and was my sole medicine.

Before the evening I felt better, and, though still very feeble, managed to write to Marston, letting him know I was safe, and requesting him to forward any letters that might arrive.

The next day, I rose, but was unable to work. The very thought of writing sickened me. Neither could I bear the thought of returning to London. I tried to read, but threw aside book after book, without being able to tell what one of them was about. If for

a moment I seemed to enter into the subject, before I reached the bottom of the page, I found I had not an idea as to what the words meant or whither they tended. After many failures, unwilling to give myself up to idle brooding, I fortunately tried some of the mystical poetry of the seventeenth century: the difficulties of that I found rather stimulate than repel me; while, much as there was in the form to displease the taste, there was more in the matter to rouse the intellect. I found also some relief in resuming my mathematical studies: the abstraction of them acted as an anodyne. But the days dragged wearily.

As soon as I was able to get on horseback, the tone of mind and body began to return. I felt as if into me some sort of animal healing passed from Lilith; and who can tell in how many ways the lower animals may not minister to the higher?

One night I had a strange experience. I give it without argument, perfectly aware that the fact may be set down to the disordered state of my physical nature, and that without injustice.

I had not for a long time thought about one of the questions which had so much occupied Charley and myself—that of immortality. As to any communication between the parted, I had never, during his life, pondered the possibility of it, although I had always had an inclination to believe that such intercourse had in rare instances taken place: former periods of the world's history, when that blinding self-consciousness which is the bane of ours was yet undeveloped, must, I thought, have been far more favourable to its occurrence. Anyhow I was convinced that it was not to be gained by effort. I confess that, in the unthinking agony of grief after Charley's death, many a time when I woke in the middle of the night and could sleep no more, I sat up in bed and prayed him, if he heard me, to come to me, and let me tell him the truth—for my sake to let me know at least that he lived, for then I should be sure that one day all would be well. But if there was any hearing, there was no answer. Charley did not come; the prayer seemed to vanish in the darkness; and my more self-possessed meditations never justified the hope of any such being heard.

One night I was sitting in my grannie's room, which, except my uncle's, was now the only one I could bear to enter. I had been reading for some time very quietly, but had leaned back in my chair, and let my thoughts go wandering whither they would, when all at once I was possessed by the conviction that Charley was near me. I saw nothing, heard nothing; of the recognized senses of humanity not one gave me a hint of a presence; and yet my whole body was aware—so at least it seemed—of the proximity of another *I*. It was as if some nervous region commensurate with my frame, were now for the first time revealed by contact with an object suitable for its apprehension. Like Eliphaz, I felt the hair of my head

stand up—not from terror, but simply, as it seemed, from the presence and its strangeness. Like others also of whom I have read, who believed themselves in the presence of the disembodied, I could not speak. I tried, but as if the medium for sound had been withdrawn, and an empty gulf lay around me, no word followed, although my very soul was full of the cry—*Charley! Charley!* And alas! in a few moments, like the faint vanishing of an unrealized thought, leaving only the assurance that something half-born from out the unknown had been there, the influence faded and died. It passed from me like the shadow of a cloud, and once more I knew but my poor lonely self, returning to its candles, its open book, its burning fire.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

SUFFERING is perhaps the only preparation for suffering: still I was but poorly prepared for what followed.

Having gathered strength, and a certain quietness which I could not mistake for peace, I returned to London towards the close of the spring. I had in the interval heard nothing of Mary. The few letters Marston had sent on had been almost exclusively from my publishers. But the very hour I reached my lodging, came a note, which I opened trembling, for it was in the handwriting of Miss Pease.

"Dear sir, I cannot, I think, be wrong in giving you a piece of information which will be in the newspapers to-morrow morning. Your old acquaintance, and my young relative, Mr. Brotherton, was married this morning, at St. George's, Hanover Square, to your late friend's sister, Miss Mary Osborne. They have just left for Dover on their way to Switzerland.—Your sincere well-wisher, JANE PEASE."

Even at this distance of time, I should have to exhort myself to write with calmness, were it not that the utter despair of conveying my feelings, if indeed my soul had not for the time passed beyond feeling into some abyss unknown to human consciousness, renders it unnecessary. This despair of communication has two sources—the one simply the conviction of the impossibility of expressing *any* feeling, much more such feeling as mine then was—and is; the other the conviction that only to the heart of love can the sufferings of love speak. The attempt of a lover to move, by the presentation of his own suffering, the heart of her who loves him not, is as unavailing as it is unmanly. The poet who sings most wailfully of the torments of the lover's hell, is but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal in the ears of her who has at best only a general com-

passion to meet the song withal—possibly only an individual vanity which crowns her with his woes as with the trophies of a conquest. True, he is understood and worshipped by all the other wailful souls in the first infernal circle, as one of the great men of their order—able to put into words full of sweet torment the dire hopelessness of their misery ; but for such the singer, singing only for ears eternally deaf to his song, cares nothing ; or if for a moment he receive consolation from their sympathy, it is but a passing weakness which the breath of an indignant self-condemnation—even contempt, the next moment sweeps away. In God alone there must be sympathy and cure ; but I had not then—have I indeed yet found what that cure is ? I am at all events now able to write with calmness. If suffering destroyed itself, as some say, mine ought to have disappeared long ago ; but to that I can neither pretend nor confess.

For the first time, after all I had encountered, I knew what suffering could be. It is still at moments an agony as of hell to recall this and the other thought that then stung me like a white-hot arrow : the shafts have long been drawn out, but the barbed heads are still there. I neither stormed nor maddened. I only felt a freezing hand lay hold of my heart, and gripe it closer and closer till I should have sickened, but that the pain ever stung me into fresh life ; and ever since I have gone about the world with that hard lump somewhere in my bosom into which the griping hand and the griped heart have grown and stiffened.

I fled at once back to my solitary house, looking for no relief in its solitude, only the negative comfort of escaping the eyes of men. I could not bear the sight of my fellow-creatures. To say that the world had grown black to me, is as nothing : I ceased—I will not say *to believe* in God, for I never dared say that mighty thing—but I ceased to hope in God. The universe had grown a negation which yet forced its presence upon me—a death that bred worms. If there were a God anywhere, this universe could be nothing more than his forsaken moth-eaten garment. He was a God who did not care. Order was all an invention of phosphorescent human brains ; light itself the mocking smile of a Jupiter over his writhing sacrifices. At times I laughed at the tortures of my own heart, saying to it, “*Writhe on, worm ; thou deservest thy writhing in that thou writhest. Godless creature, why dost thou not laugh with me ? Am I not merry over thee and the world—in that ye are both rottenness to the core ?*” The next moment my heart and I would come together with a shock, and I knew it was myself that scorned myself.

Such being my mood, it will cause no surprise if I say that I too was tempted to suicide ; the wonder would have been if it had been otherwise. The soft keen curves of that fatal dagger, which had not only slain Charley but all my hopes—for had he lived this horror

could not have been—grew almost lovely in my eyes. Until now it had looked cruel, fiendish, hateful; but now I would lay it before me and contemplate it. In some griefs there is a wonderful power of self-contemplation, which indeed forms their only solace; the moment it can set the sorrow away from itself sufficiently to regard it, the tortured heart begins to repose; but suddenly, like a waking tiger, the sorrow leaps again into its lair, and the agony commences anew. The dagger was the type of my grief and its torture: might it not, like the brazen serpent, be the cure for the sting of its living counterpart? But alas! where was the certainty? Could I slay *myself*? This outer breathing form I could dismiss—but the pain was not *there*. I was not mad, and I knew that a deeper death than that could give, at least than I had any assurance that could give, alone could bring repose. For, impossible as I had always found it actually to believe in immortality, I now found it equally impossible to believe in annihilation. And even if annihilation should be the final result, who could tell but it might require ages of a horrible slow-decaying dream-consciousness, to kill the living thing which felt itself other than its body?

Until now, I had always accepted what seemed the natural and universal repugnance to absolute dissolution, as the strongest argument on the side of immortality;—for why should a man shrink from that which belonged to his nature? But now annihilation seemed the one lovely thing, the one sole only lonely thought in which lay no blackness of burning darkness. Oh for one eternal unconscious sleep!—the nearest likeness we can cherish of that inconceivable nothingness—ever denied by the very thinking of it—by the vain attempt to realize that whose very existence is the knowing nothing of itself! Could that dagger have insured me such repose, or had there been any draught of Lethe, utter Lethe, whose blessed poison would have assuredly dissipated like a fume this conscious, self-tormenting *me*, I should not now be writhing anew, as in the clutches of an old grief, clasping me like a corpse, stung to simulated life by the galvanic battery of recollection. Vivid as it seems—all I suffer as I write is but a faint phantasm of what I then endured.

I learned therefore that to some minds the argument for immortality drawn from the apparently universal shrinking from annihilation must be ineffectual, seeing they themselves do not shrink from it. Convince a man that there is no God—or, for I doubt if that be altogether possible—make it, I will say, impossible for him to hope in God—and it cannot be that annihilation should seem an evil. If there is no God, annihilation is the one thing to be longed for with all that might of longing which is the mainspring of human action. In a word, it is not immortality the human heart cries out after, but that immortal eternal thought whose life is its life, whose

wisdom is its wisdom, whose ways and whose thoughts shall—must one day—become its ways and its thoughts. Dissociate immortality from the living Immortality and it is not a thing to be desired—not a thing that can on those terms, or even on the fancy of those terms, be desired.

But such thoughts as these were far enough from me then. I lived because I despaired of death. I ate by a sort of blind animal instinct, and so lived. The time had been when I would despise myself for being able to eat in the midst of emotion; but now I cared so little for the emotion even, that eating or not eating had nothing to do with the matter. I ate because meat was set before me; I slept because sleep came upon me. It was a horrible time. My life seemed only a vermiculate one, a crawling about of half-thoughts-half-feelings through the corpse of a decaying existence. The heart of being was withdrawn from me, and my life was but the vacant pericardium in which it had once throbbed out and sucked in the red fountains of life and gladness.

I would not be thought to have fallen to this all but bottomless depth only because I had lost Mary. Still less was it because of the fact that in her, around whom had gathered all the devotion with which the man in me could regard woman, I had lost all woman-kind. It was the loss of Mary, as I then judged it, not, I repeat, the fact that I had lost her. It was that she had lost herself. Thence it was, I say, that I lost my hope in God. For, if there were a God, how could he let purity be clasped in the arms of defilement? how could he marry my Athanasia—not to a corpse, but to a Plague? Here was the man who had done more to ruin her brother than any but her father, and God had given her to him! I had had—with the commonest of men—some notion of womanly purity—how was it that hers had not instinctively shuddered and shrunk? how was it that the life of it had not taken refuge with death to shun bare contact with the coarse impurity of such a nature as that of Geoffrey Brotherton? My dreams had been dreams indeed! Was my Athanasia dead, or had she never been? In my thought, she had “said to Corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.” Who should henceforth say of any woman that she was impure? She *might* love him—true; but what was she then who was able to love such a man? It was this that stormed the citadel of my hope, and drove me from even thinking of a God.

Gladly would I now have welcomed any bodily suffering that could hide me from myself; but no illness came. I was a living pain, a conscious ill-being. In a thousand forms those questions would ever recur, but without hope of answer. When I fell asleep from exhaustion, hideous visions of her with Geoffrey would start me up with a great cry, sometimes with a curse on my lips. Nor were they

the most horrible of those dreams in which she would help him to mock me. Once, and only once, I found myself dreaming the dream of *that* night, and I knew that I had dreamed it before. Through palace and chapel and charnel-house, I followed her, ever with a dim sense of awful result; and when at the last she lifted the shining veil, instead of the face of Athanasia, the bare teeth of a skull grinned at me from under a spotted shroud, through which the sunlight shone from behind, revealing all its horrors. I was not mad—my reason had not given way: *how* remains a marvel.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE DAWN.

ALL places were alike to me now—for the universe was but one dreary chasm whence I could not escape. One evening I sat by the open window of my chamber, which looked towards those trees and that fatal Moldwarp Hall. My suffering had now grown dull by its own excess, and I had moments of listless vacuity, the nearest approach to peace I had yet experienced. It was a fair evening of early summer—but I was utterly careless of nature as of all beyond it. The sky was nothing to me—and the earth was all unlovely. There I sat, heavy, but free from torture; a kind of quiet had stolen over me. I was roused by the tiniest breath of wind on my cheek, as if the passing wing of some butterfly had fanned me; and on that faintest motion came a scent as from long-forgotten fields, a scent like as of sweet-peas or wild roses, but of neither: flowers were none nearer me than the gardens of the Hall. I started with a cry. It was the scent of the garments of my Athanasia, as I had dreamed it in my dream! Whence that wind had borne it, who could tell? but in the husk that had overgrown my being it had found a cranny, and through that cranny, with the scent, Nature entered. I looked up to the blue sky, wept, and for the first time fell on my knees. "O God!" I cried, and that was all. But what are the prayers of the whole universe more than expansions of that one cry? It is not what God can give us but God that we want. Call the whole thing fancy if you will; it was at least no fancy that the next feeling of which I was conscious was compassion: from that moment I began to search heaven and earth and the soul of man and woman for excuses wherewith to clothe the idea of Mary Osborne. For weeks and weeks I pondered, and by degrees the following conclusions wrought themselves out in my brain:—

That she had never seen life as a whole; that her religious theories had ever been eating away and absorbing her life, so preventing her religion from interpenetrating and glorifying it; that in regard to certain facts and consequences she had been left to an ignorance

which her innocence rendered profound; that, attracted by the worldly splendour of the offer, her father and mother had urged her compliance, and, broken in spirit by the fate of Charley, and having always been taught that self-denial was in itself a virtue, she had taken the worldly desires of her parents for the will of God, and blindly yielded; that Brotherton was capable, for his ends, of representing himself as possessed of religion enough to satisfy the scruples of her parents, and, such being satisfied, she had resisted her own as evil things.

Whether his hatred of me had had any share in his desire to possess her, I hardly thought of inquiring.

Of course I did not for a single moment believe that Mary had had the slightest notion of the bitterness, the torture, the temptation of Satan it would be to me. Doubtless the feeling of her father concerning the death of Charley had seemed to hollow an impassable gulf between us. Worn and weak, and not knowing what she did, my dearest friend had yielded herself to the embrace of my deadliest foe. If he was such as I had too good reason for believing him, she was far more to be pitied than I. Lonely she must be—lonely as I—for who was there to understand and love her? Bitterly too by this time she must have suffered, for the dove can never be at peace in the bosom of the vulture, or cease to hate the carrion of which he must ever carry about with him at least the disgusting memorials. Alas! I too had been her enemy, and had cried out against her; but now I would love her more and better than ever! Oh! if I knew but something I could do for her, some service which on the bended knees of my spirit I might offer her! I clomb the heights of my grief, and looked abroad, but alas! I was such a poor creature! A dabbler in the ways of the world, a writer of tales which even those who cared to read them counted fantastic and Utopian, who was I to weave a single silken thread into the web of her life? How could I bear her one poorest service? Never in this world could I approach her near enough to touch yet once again the hem of her garment. All I could do was to love her. No—I could and did suffer for her. Alas! that suffering was only for myself, and could do nothing for her! It was indeed some consolation to me that my misery came from her hand; but if she knew it, it would but add to her pain. In my heart I could only pray her pardon for my wicked and selfish thoughts concerning her, and vow again and ever to regard her as my Athanasia.—But yes! there was one thing I *could* do for her: I would be a true man for her sake; she should have some satisfaction in me; I would once more arise and go to my Father.

The instant the thought arose in my mind, I fell down before the possible God in an agony of weeping. All complaint of my own doom had vanished, now that I began to do her the justice of love. Why should I be blessed—here and now at least—according to my

notions of blessedness? Let the great heart of the universe do with me as it pleased! Let the Supreme take his own time to justify himself to the heart that sought to love him! I gave up myself, was willing to suffer, to be a living pain, so long as he pleased; and the moment I yielded, half the pain was gone; I gave my Athanasia yet again to God, and all *might* yet, in some high, far-off, better-world-way, be well. I could wait and endure. If only God was, and was God, then it was, or would be, well with Mary—well with me!

But, as I still sat, a flow of sweet sad repentant thought passing gently through my bosom, all at once the self to which, unable to confide it to the care of its own very life, the God conscious of himself and in himself conscious of it, I had been for months offering the sacrifices of despair and indignation, arose in spectral hideousness before me. I saw that I, a child of the infinite, had been worshipping the finite—and therein dragging down the infinite towards the fate of the finite. I do not mean that in Mary Osborne I had been worshipping the finite. It was the eternal, the lovely, the true that in her I had been worshipping: in myself I had been worshipping the mean, the selfish, the finite, the god of spiritual greed. Only in himself *can* a man find the finite to worship; only in turning back upon himself does he create the finite for and by his worship. All the works of God are everlasting; the only perishable are some of the works of man. All love is a worship of the infinite: what is called a man's love for himself, is not love; it is but a phantastic resemblance of love; it is a creating of the finite, a creation of death. A man *cannot* love himself. If all love be not creation—as I think it is—it is at least the only thing in harmony with creation and the love of oneself is its absolute opposite. I sickened at the sight of myself: how should I ever get rid of the demon? The same instant I saw the one escape: I must offer it back to its source—commit it to him who had made it. I must live no more from it, but from the source of it; seek to know nothing more of it than he gave me to know by his presence therein. Thus might I become one with the Eternal in such an absorption as Buddha had never dreamed; thus might I draw life ever fresh from its fountain. And in that fountain alone would I contemplate its reflex. What flashes of self-consciousness might cross me, should be God's gift, not of my seeking, and offered again to him in ever new self-sacrifice. Alas! alas! this I saw then, and this I yet see; but oh, how far am I still from that divine annihilation! The only comfort is, God is, and I am his, else I should not be at all.

I saw too that thus God also lives—in his higher way. I saw, shadowed out in the absolute devotion of Jesus to men, that the very life of God by which we live is an everlasting eternal giving of himself away. He asserts himself, only, solely, altogether, in an infinite sacrifice of devotion. So must we live; the child must be as

the father; live he cannot on any other plan, struggle as he may. The father requires of him nothing that he is not or does not himself, who is the one prime unconditioned sacrificer and sacrifice. I threw myself on the ground, and offered back my poor wretched self to its owner, to be taken and kept, purified and made divine.

The same moment a sense of reviving health began to possess me. With many fluctuations, it has possessed me, has grown, and is now, if not a persistent cheerfulness, yet an unyielding hope. The world bloomed again around me. The sunrise again grew gloriously dear; and the sadness of the moon was lighted from a higher sun than that which returns with the morning.

My relation to Mary resolved and re-formed itself in my mind into something I can explain only by the following—call it dream: it was not a dream; call it vision: it was not a vision; and yet I will tell it as if it were either, being far truer than either.

I lay like a child on one of God's arms. I could not see his face, and the arm that held me was a great cloudy arm. I knew that on his other arm lay Mary. But between us were forests and plains, mountains and great seas; and, unspeakably worse than all, a gulf with which words had nothing to do, a gulf of pure separation, of impassable nothingness, across which no device, I say not of human skill, but of human imagination, could cast a single connecting cord. There lay Mary, and here lay I—both in God's arms—utterly parted. As in a swoon I lay, through which suddenly came the words: "What God hath joined, man cannot sunder." I lay thinking what they could mean. All at once I thought I knew. Straightway I rose on the cloudy arm, looked down on a measureless darkness beneath me, and up on a great, dreary, world-filled eternity above me, and crept along the arm towards the bosom of God.

In telling my—neither vision nor dream nor ecstasy, I cannot help it that the forms grow so much plainer and more definite in the words than they were in the revelation. Words always give either too much or too little shape: when you want to be definite, you find your words clumsy and blunt; when you want them for a vague shadowy image, you straightway find them give a sharp and impertinent outline, refusing to lend themselves to your undefined though vivid thought. Forms themselves are hard enough to manage, but words are unmanageable. I must therefore trust to the heart of my reader.

I crept into the bosom of God, and along a great cloudy peace, which I could not understand, for it did not yet enter into me. At length I came to the heart of God, and through that my journey lay. The moment I entered it, the great peace appeared to enter mine, and I began to understand it. Something melted in my heart, and for a moment I thought I was dying, but I found I was being born again. My heart was empty of its old selfishness, and I loved Mary

tenfold—nor longer in the least for my own sake, but all for her loveliness. The same moment I knew that the heart of God was a bridge, along which I was crossing the unspeakable eternal gulf that divided Mary and me. At length, somehow, I know not how, somewhere, I know not where, I was where she was. She knew nothing of my presence, turned neither face nor eye to meet me, stretched out no hand to give me the welcome of even a friend, and yet I not only knew, but felt that she was mine. I wanted nothing from her; desired the presence of her loveliness only that I might know it; hung about her life as a butterfly over the flower he loves; was satisfied that she should *be*. I had left my self behind in the heart of God, and now I was a pure essence, fit to rejoice in the essential. But alas! my whole being was not yet subject to its best. I began to long to be able to do something for her besides—I foolishly said *beyond* loving her. Back rushed my old self in the selfish thought: Some day—will she not know—and at least—? That moment the vision vanished. I was tossed—ah! let me hope, only to the other arm of God—but I lay in torture yet again. For a man may see visions manifold, and believe them all; and yet his faith shall not save him; something more is needed—he must have that presence of God in his soul, of which the Son of Man spoke, saying: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” God in him, he will be able to love for very love’s sake; God not in him, his best love will die into selfishness.

CHAPTER LX.

MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.

THE morning then which had thus dawned upon me, was often overclouded heavily. Yet it was the morning and not the night; and one of the strongest proofs that it was the morning, lay in this, that again I could think in verse.

One day, after an hour or two of bitterness, I wrote the following. A man’s trouble must have receded from him a little for the moment, if he deseries any shape in it, so as to be able to give it form in words. I set it down with no hope of better than the vaguest sympathy. There came no music with this one.

If it be that a man and a woman
Are made for no mutual grief;
That each gives the pain to some other,
And neither can give the relief;

If thus the chain of the world
Is tied round the holy feet,

I scorn to shrink from facing
What my brothers and sisters meet.

But I cry when the wolf is tearing
At the core of my heart as now :
When I was the man to be tortured,
Why should the woman be *thou* ?

I am not so ready to sink from the lofty into the abject now. If at times I yet feel that the whole creation is groaning and travailing, I know what it is for—its redemption from the dominion of its own death into that sole liberty which comes only of being filled and eternally possessed by God himself, its source and its life.

And now I found also that my heart began to be moved with a compassion towards my fellows such as I had never before experienced. I shall best convey what I mean by transcribing another little poem I wrote about the same time.

Once I sat on a crimson throne, !
And I held the world in fee ;
Below me I heard my brothers moan,
And I bent me down to see ;—

Lovingly bent and looked on them,
But I had no inward pain ;
I sat in the heart of my ruby gem,
Like a rainbow without the rain.

My throne is vanished ; helpless I lie
At the foot of its broken stair ;
And the sorrows of all humanity
Through my heart make a thoroughfare.

Let such things rest for a while : I have now to relate another incident—strange enough, but by no means solitary in the records of human experience. My reader will probably think that of dreams and visions there has already been more than enough ; but perhaps she will kindly remember that at this time I had no outer life at all. Whatever bore to me the look of existence was within me. All my days the tendency had been to an undue predominance of thought over action, and now that the springs of action were for a time dried up, what wonder was it if thought, lording it alone, should assume a reality beyond its right ? Hence the life of the day was prolonged into the night ; nor was there other than a small difference in their conditions, beyond the fact that the contrast of outer things was removed in sleep ; whence the shapes which the waking thought had assumed, had space and opportunity, as it were, to thicken before the mental eye until they became dreams and visions.

But concerning what I am about to relate I shall offer no theory. Such mere operation of my own thoughts may be sufficient to account for it : I would only ask—does any one know what the *mere* opera-

tion of his own thoughts signifies? I cannot isolate myself, especially in those moments when the individual will is less awake, from the ocean of life and thought which not only surrounds me, but on which I am in a sense one of the floating bubbles.

I was asleep, but I thought I lay awake in bed—in the room where I still slept—that which had been my grannie's.—It was dark midnight, and the wind was howling about the gable and in the chimneys. The door opened, and some one entered. By the lamp she carried I knew my great-grandmother—just as she looked in life, only that now she walked upright and with ease. That I was dreaming is plain from the fact that I felt no surprise at seeing her.

"Wilfrid, come with me," she said, approaching the bedside. "Rise."

I obeyed like a child.

"Put your cloak on," she continued. "It is a stormy midnight, but we have not so far to go as you may think."

"I think nothing, grannie," I said. "I do not know where you want to take me."

"Come and see then, my son. You must at last learn what has been kept from you far too long."

As she spoke, she led the way down the stair, through the kitchen, and out into the dark night. I remember the wind blowing my cloak about, but I remember nothing more until I found myself in the winding hazel-walled lane, leading to Umberden Church. My grannie was leading me by one withered hand; in the other she held the lamp, over the flame of which the wind had no power. She led me into the churchyard, took the key from under the tombstone, unlocked the door of the church, put the lamp into my hand, pushed me gently in, and shut the door behind me. I walked to the vestry, and set the lamp on the desk, with a vague feeling that I had been there before, and that I had now to do something at this desk. Above it I caught sight of the row of vellum-bound books, and remembered that one of them contained something of importance to me. I took it down. The moment I opened it, I remembered with distinctness the fatal discrepancy in the entry of my grannie's marriage. I found the place: to my astonishment the date of the year was now the same as that on the preceding page—1747. That instant I awoke in the first gush of the sunrise.

I could not help feeling even a little excited by my dream, and the impression of it grew upon me: I wanted to see the book again. I could not rest. Something seemed constantly urging me to go and look at it. Half to get the thing out of my head, I sent Styles to fetch Lilith, and for the first time since the final assurance of my loss, mounted her. I rode for Umberden Church.

It was long after noon before I had made up my mind, and when, having tied Lilith to the gate, I entered the church, one red ray from

the setting sun was nestling in the very roof. Knowing what I should find, yet wishing to see it again, I walked across to the vestry, feeling rather uncomfortable at the thought of prying thus alone into the parish register.

I could almost have persuaded myself that was I dreaming still; and in looking back, I can hardly in my mind separate the dreaming from the waking visit.

Of course I found just what I had expected—1748, not 1747—at the top of the page, and was about to replace the register, when the thought occurred to me, that, if the dream had been potent enough to bring me hither, it might yet mean something. I lifted the cover again. There the entry stood undeniably plain. This time, however, I noted two other little facts concerning it.

I will just remind my reader that the entry was crushed in between the date of the year and the next entry—plainly enough to the eye; and that there was no attestation to the entries of 1747. The first additional fact—and clearly an important one—was, that in the summing up of 1748, before the signature, which stood near the bottom of the cover, a figure had been altered. Originally it stood: "In all six couple," but the six had been altered to a seven—corresponding with the actual number. This appeared proof positive that the first entry on the cover was a forged insertion. And how clumsily it had been managed!

"What could my grannie be about?" I said to myself.

It never occurred to me then that it might have been intended to look like a forgery.

Still I kept staring at it, as if by very force of staring I could find out something. There was not the slightest sign of erasure or alteration beyond the instance I have mentioned. Yet—and here was my second note—when I compared the whole of the writing on the cover with the writing on the preceding page, though it seemed the same hand, it seemed to have got stiffer and shakier, as if the writer had grown old between. Finding nothing very suggestive in this, however, I fell into a dreamy mood, watching the red light, as it faded, up in the old, dark, distorted roof of the desolate church—with my hand lying on the book.

I have always had a bad habit of pulling and scratching at any knot or roughness in the paper of the book I happen to be reading; and now, almost unconsciously, with my forefinger I was pulling at an edge of parchment which projected from the joint of the cover. When I came to myself and proceeded to close the book, I found it would not shut properly because of a piece which I had curled up. Seeking to restore it to its former position, I fancied I saw a line or edge running all down the joint, and looking closer saw that these last entries in place of being upon a leaf of the book pasted to the cover in order to strengthen the binding, as I had supposed,

were indeed upon a leaf which was pasted to the cover, but one not otherwise connected with the volume.

I now began to feel a more lively interest in the behaviour of my dream-grannie. Here might lie something to explain the hitherto inexplicable. I proceeded to pull the leaf gently away. It was of parchment, much thinner than the others, which were of vellum. I had withdrawn only a small portion when I saw there was writing under it. My heart began to beat faster. But I would not be rash. My old experience with parchment in the mending of my uncle's books came to my aid. If I pulled at the dry skin as I had been doing, I might not only damage it, but destroy the writing under it. I could do nothing without water, and I did not know where to find any. It would be better to ride to the village of Gastford, somewhere about two miles off, put up there, and arrange for future proceedings.

I did not know the way, and for a long time could see no one to ask. The consequence was that I made a wide round, and it was nearly dark before I reached the village. I thought it better for the present to feed Lilith, and then make the best of my way home.

The next evening—I felt so like a thief that I sought the thievish security of the night—having provided myself with what was necessary, and borrowed a horse for Styles, I set out again.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE PARISH REGISTER.

THE sky clouded as we went ; it grew very dark, and the wind began to blow. It threatened a storm. I told Styles a little of what I was about—just enough to impress on him the necessity for prudence. The wind increased, and by the time we gained the copse, it was roaring, and the slender hazels bending like a field of corn.

“You will have enough to do with two horses,” I said.

“I don't mind it, sir,” Styles answered. “A word from me will quiet Miss Lilith ; and for the other, I've known him pretty well for two years past.”

I left them tolerably sheltered in the winding lane, and betook myself alone to the church. Cautiously I opened the door, and felt my way from pew to pew, for it was quite dark. I could just distinguish the windows from the walls, and nothing more. As soon as I reached the vestry, I struck a light, got down the volume, and proceeded to moisten the parchment with a wet sponge. For some time the water made little impression on the old parchment, of which but one side could be exposed to its influences, and I began to fear I should be much longer in gaining my end than I had expected. The wind roared and howled about the trembling church, which seemed too weak with age to resist such an onslaught ; but when at length the

skin began to grow soft and yield to my gentle efforts at removal, I became far too much absorbed in the simple operation, which had to be performed with all the gentleness and nicety of a surgical one, to heed the uproar about me. Slowly the glutinous adhesion gave way, and slowly the writing revealed itself. In mingled hope and doubt I restrained my curiosity; and as one teases oneself sometimes by dallying with a letter of the greatest interest, not until I had folded down the parchment clear of what was manifestly an entry, did I bring my candle close to it, and set myself to read it. Then indeed I found I had reason to regard with respect the dream which had brought me thither.

Right under the 1748 of the parchment, stood on the vellum cover 1747. Then followed the usual blank, and then came an entry corresponding word for word with the other entry of my great grandfather and mother's marriage. In all probability Moldwarp Hall was mine! Little as it could do for me now, I confess to a keen pang of pleasure at the thought.

Meantime, I followed out my investigation, and gradually stripped the parchment off the vellum to within a couple of inches of the bottom of the cover. The result of knowledge was as follows.

Next to the entry of the now hardly hypothetical marriage of my ancestors, stood the summing up of the marriages of 1747, with the signature of the rector. I paused, and, turning back, counted them. Including that in which alone I was interested, I found the number given correct. Next came by itself the figures 1748, and then a few more entries, followed by the usual summing up and signature of the rector. From this I turned to the leaf of parchment: there was a difference: upon the latter the sum was six, altered to seven; on the former it was five. This of course suggested further search: I soon found where the difference indicated lay.

As the entry of the marriage was, on the forged leaf, shifted up close to the forged 1748, and as the summing and signature had to be omitted, because they belonged to the end of 1747, a blank would have been left, and the writing below would have shone through and attracted attention, revealing the forgery of the whole, instead of that of the part only which was intended to look a forgery. To prevent this, an altogether fictitious entry had been made—over the summing and signature. This, with the genuine entries faithfully copied, made of the five, six, which the forger had written and then blotted into a seven, intending to expose the entry of my ancestors' marriage as a forgery, while the rest of the year's register should look genuine. It took me some little trouble to clear it all up to my own mind, but by degrees everything settled into its place, and assuming an intelligible shape in virtue of its position.

With my many speculations as to why the mechanism of the forgery had assumed this shape, I need not trouble my reader. Suf-

fice it to say that on more than one supposition, I can account for it satisfactorily to myself. One other remark only will I make concerning it: I have no doubt it was an old forgery. One after another those immediately concerned in it had died, and there the falsehood lurked—in latent power—inoperative until my second visit to Umberden Church. But what differences might there not have been had it not started into activity for the brief space betwixt then and my sorrow?

I left the parchment still attached to the cover at the bottom, and, laying a sheet of paper between the formerly adhering surfaces, lest they should again adhere, closed and replaced the volume. Then, looking at my watch, I found that, instead of an hour as I had supposed, I had been in the church three hours. It was nearly eleven o'clock, too late for anything further that night.

When I came out, the sky was clear and the stars were shining. The storm had blown over. Much rain had fallen. But when the wind ceased or the rain began, I had no recollection: the storm had vanished altogether from my consciousness. I found Styles where I had left him, smoking his pipe and leaning against Lilith, who—I cannot call her *which*—was feeding on the fine grass of the lane. The horse, he had picketed near. We mounted and rode home.

The next thing was to see the rector of Umberden. He lived in his other parish, and thither I rode the following day to call upon him. I found him an old gentleman, of the squire-type of rector. As soon as he heard my name, he seemed to know who I was, and at once showed himself hospitable.

I told him that I came to him as I might, were I a Catholic, to a father-confessor. This startled him a little.

"Don't tell me anything I ought not to keep secret," he said; and it gave me confidence in him at once.

"I will not," I returned. "The secret is purely my own. Whatever crime there is in it, was past punishment long before I was born; and it was committed against, not by my family. But it is rather a long story, and I hope I shall not be tedious."

He assured me of his perfect leisure.

I told him everything, from my earliest memory, which bore on the discovery I had at length made. He soon showed signs of interest; and when I had ended the tale with the facts of the preceding night, he silently rose and walked about the room. After a few moments, he said:

"And what do you mean to do, Mr. Cumbermede?"

"Nothing," I answered, "so long as Sir Giles is alive. He was kind to me when I was a boy."

He came up behind me where I was seated, and laid his hand gently on my head; then, without a word, resumed his walk.

"And if you survive him, what then?"

"Then I must be guided partly by circumstances," I said.

"And what do you want of me?"

"I want you to go with me to the church, and see the book, that, in case of anything happening to it, you may be a witness concerning its previous contents."

"I am too old to be the only witness," he said. "You ought to have several of your own age."

"I want as few to know the secret as may be," I answered.

"You should have your lawyer one of them."

"He would never leave me alone about it," I replied; "and positively I shall take no measures at present. Some day I hope to punish him for deserting me as he did."

For I had told him how Mr. Coningham had behaved.

"Revenge, Mr. Cumbermede?"

"Not a serious one. All the punishment I hope to give him is but to show him the fact of the case, and leave him to feel as he may about it."

"There can't be much harm in that."

He reflected for a few moments, and then said:

"I will tell you what will be best. We shall go and see the book together. I will make an extract of both entries, and give a description of the state of the volume, with an account of how the second entry—or more properly the first—came to be discovered. This I shall sign in the presence of two witnesses, who need know nothing of the contents of the paper. Of that you shall yourself take charge."

We went together to the church. The old man, after making a good many objections, was at length satisfied, and made notes for his paper. He started the question whether it would not be better to secure that volume at least under lock and key. For this I thought there was no occasion—that in fact it was safer where it was, and more certain of being forthcoming when wanted. I did suggest that the key of the church might be deposited in a place of safety; but he answered that it had been kept there ever since he came to the living forty years ago, and for how long before that, he could not tell; and so a change would attract attention, and possibly make some talk in the parish, which had better be avoided.

Before the end of the week, he had his document ready. He signed it in my presence, and in that of two of his parishioners, who as witnesses appended their names and abodes. I have it now in my possession. I shall inclose it, with my great-grandfather and mother's letters—and something besides—in the packet containing this history.

That same week, Sir Giles Brotherton died.

CHAPTER LXII.

A FOOLISH TRIUMPH.

I SHOULD have now laid claim to my property, but for Mary. To turn Sir Geoffrey with his mother and sister out of it, would have caused me little compunction, for they would still be rich enough; I confess indeed it would have given me satisfaction. Nor could I say what real hurt of any kind it would occasion to Mary; and if I were writing for the public, instead of my one reader, I know how foolishly incredible it must appear that for her sake I should forego such claims. She would, however, I trust, have been able to believe it without the proofs which I intend to give her. The fact was simply this: I could not even for my own sake bear the thought of taking, in any manner or degree, a position if but apparently antagonistic to her. My enemy was her husband: he should reap the advantage of being her husband; for her sake he should for the present retain what was mine. So long as there should be no reason to fear his adopting a different policy from his father's in respect of his tenants, I felt myself at liberty to leave things as they were; for Sir Giles had been a good landlord, and I knew the son was regarded with favour in the county. Were he to turn out unjust or oppressive, however, then duty on my part would come in. But I must also remind my reader that I had no love for affairs; that I had an income perfectly sufficient for my wants; that, both from my habits of thought and from my sufferings, my regard was upon life itself—was indeed so far from being confined to this chrysalid beginning thereof, that I had lost all interest in this world save as the porch to the house of life. And, should I ever meet her again, in any possible future of being, how much rather would I not stand before her as one who had been even Quixotic for her sake—as one who for a hair's-breadth of her interest had felt the sacrifice of a fortune a merely natural movement of his life! She would then know not merely that I was true to her, but that I had been true in what I professed to believe when I sought her favour. And if it had been a pleasure to me—call it a weakness, and I will not oppose the impeachment;—call it self-pity, and I will confess to that as having a share in it;—but, if it had been a shadowy pleasure to me to fancy I suffered for her sake, my present resolution, while it did not add the weight of a feather to my suffering, did yet give me a similar vague satisfaction.

I must also confess to a certain satisfaction in feeling that I had power over my enemy—power of making him feel my power—power of vindicating my character against him as well, seeing one who could thus abstain from asserting his own rights could hardly have been one to invade the rights of another; but the enjoyment

of this consciousness appeared to depend on my silence: if I broke that, the strength would depart from me; but while I held my peace, I held my foe in an invisible mesh. I half deluded myself into fancying that while I kept my power over him unexercised, I retained a sort of pledge for his conduct to Mary, of which I was more than doubtful; for a man with such antecedents as his, a man who had been capable of behaving as he had behaved to Charley, was less than likely to be true to his wife: he was less than likely to treat the sister as a lady, who to the brother had been a traitorous seducer.

I have now to confess a fault as well as an imprudence—punished, I believe, in the results.

The behaviour of Mr. Coningham still rankled a little in my bosom. From Geoffrey I had never looked for anything but evil; of Mr. Coningham I had expected differently, and I began to meditate the revenge of holding him up to himself: I would punish him in a manner which, with his confidence in his business faculty, he must feel: I would simply show him how the precipitation of selfish disappointment had led him astray, and frustrated his designs. For if he had given even a decent attention to the matter, he would have found in the forgery itself hints sufficient to suggest the desirableness of further investigation.

I had not however concluded upon anything, when one day I accidentally met him, and we had a little talk about business, for he continued to look after the rent of my field. He informed me that Sir Geoffrey Brotherton had been doing all he could to get even temporary possession of the park, as we called it; and, although I said nothing of it to Mr. Coningham, my suspicion is, that, had he succeeded, he would, at the risk of a lawsuit in which he would certainly have been cast, have ploughed it up. He told me also that Clara was in poor health; she who had looked as if no blight could ever touch her, had broken down utterly. The shadow of her sorrow was plain enough on the face of her father, and his confident manner had a little yielded, although he was the old man still. His father had died a little before Sir Giles. The new baronet had not offered him the succession.

I asked him to go with me yet once more to Umerden Church—for I wanted to show him something he had overlooked in the register—not, I said, that it would be of the slightest furtherance to his former hopes. He agreed at once, already a little ashamed perhaps of the way in which he had abandoned me. Before we parted we made an appointment to meet at the church.

We went at once to the vestry. I took down the volume, and laid it before him. He opened it, with a curious look at me first. But the moment he lifted the cover, its condition at once attracted and as instantly rivetted his attention. He gave me one glance more, in which questions and remarks and exclamations numberless lay in

embryo ; then turning to the book, was presently absorbed, first in reading the genuine entry, next in comparing it with the forged one.

"Right after all!" he exclaimed at length.

"In what?" I asked. "In dropping me without a word, as if I had been an impostor? In forgetting that you yourself had raised in me the hopes whose discomfiture you took as a personal injury?"

"My dear sir!" he stammered in an expostulatory tone, "you must make allowance. It was a tremendous disappointment to me."

"I cannot say I felt it quite so much myself, but at least you owed me an apology for having misled me."

"I had *not* misled you," he retorted angrily, pointing to the register.—"There!"

"You left *me* to find that out though. *You* took no further pains in the matter."

"How *did* you find it out?" he asked, clutching at a change in the tone of the conversation.

I said nothing of my dream, but I told him everything else concerning the discovery. When I had finished—

"It's all plain sailing now," he cried. "There is not an obstacle in the way. I will set the thing in motion the instant I get home.—It will be a victory worth achieving!" he added, rubbing his hands.

"Mr. Coningham, I have not the slightest intention of moving in the matter," I said.

His face fell.

"You do not mean—when you hold them in your very hands—to throw away every advantage of birth and fortune, and be a nobody in the world?"

"Infinite advantages of the kind you mean, Mr. Coningham, could make me not one whit more than I am: they *might* make me less."

"Come, come," he expostulated; "you must not allow disappointment to upset your judgment of things."

"My judgment of things lies deeper than any disappointment I have yet had," I replied. "My uncle's teaching has at last begun to bear fruit in me."

"Your uncle was a fool!" he exclaimed.

"But for my uncle's sake, I would knock you down for daring to couple such a word with *him*."

He turned on me with a sneer. His eyes had receded in his head, and in his rage he grinned. The old ape-face, which had lurked in my memory ever since the time I first saw him, came out so plainly that I started: the child had read his face aright! the following judgment of the man had been wrong! the child's fear had not imprinted a false idolon upon the growing brain.

"What right had you," he said, "to bring me all this way for such tomfoolery?"

"I told you it would not further your wishes.—But who brought me here for nothing first?" I added, most foolishly.

"I was myself deceived. I did not intend to deceive you."

"I know that. God forbid I should be unjust to you. But you have proved to me that your friendship was all a pretence; that your private ends were all your object. When you discovered that I could not serve those, you dropped me like a bit of glass you had taken for a diamond. Have you any right to grumble if I give you the discipline of a passing shame?"

"Mr. Cumbermede," he said, through his teeth, "you will repent this."

I gave him no answer, and he left the church in haste. Having replaced the register, I was following at my leisure, when I heard sounds that made me hurry to the door. Lilith was plunging and rearing and pulling at the bridle which I had thrown over one of the spiked bars of the gate. Another moment and she must have broken loose, or dragged the gate upon her—more likely the latter, for the bridle was a new one with broad reins—when some frightful injury would in all probability have been the consequence to herself. But a word from me quieted her, and she stood till I came up. Every inch of her was trembling. I suspected at once, and in a moment discovered plainly that Mr. Coningham had struck her with his whip: there was a big weal on the fine skin of her hip and across her croup. She shrank like a hurt child when my hand approached the injured part, but moved neither hoof nor head.

Having patted and petted and consoled her a little, I mounted and rode after Mr. Coningham. Nor was it difficult to overtake him, for he was going a footpace. He was stooping in his saddle, and when I drew near, I saw that he was looking very pale. I did not, however, suspect that he was in pain.

"It was a cowardly thing to strike the poor dumb animal!" I cried.

"You would have struck her yourself," he answered with a curse, "if she had broken your leg."

I rode nearer. I knew well enough that she would not have kicked him if he had not struck her first; and I could see that his leg was not broken; but evidently he was in great suffering.

"I am very sorry," I said. "Can I help you?"

"Go to the devil!" he groaned.

I am ashamed to say the answer made me so angry that I spoke the truth.

"Don't suppose you deceive me," I said. "I know well enough my mare did not kick you before you struck her. Then she lashed out, of course."

I waited for no reply, but turned and rode back to the church the door of which, in my haste, I had left open. I locked it, replaced the key, and then rode quietly home.

But as I went, I began to feel that I had done wrong. No doubt, Mr. Coningham deserved it, but the law was not in my hands. No man has a right to *punish* another. Vengeance belongs to a higher

region, and the vengeance of God is a very different thing from the vengeance of man. However it may be softened with the name of retribution, revenge runs into all our notions of justice; and until we love purely, so it must ever be.

All I had gained was self-rebuke, and another enemy. Having reached home, I read the Manual of Epictetus right through before I laid it down, and, if it did not teach me to love my enemies, it taught me at least to be ashamed of myself. Then I wrote to Mr. Coningham, saying I was sorry I had spoken to him as I did, and begging him to let by-gones be by-gones; assuring him that if ever I moved in the matter of our difference, he should be the first to whom I applied for assistance.

He returned me no answer.

CHAPTER LXIII.

A COLLISION.

AND now came a dreary time of reaction. There seemed nothing left for me to do, and I felt listless and weary. Something kept urging me to get away and hide myself, and I soon made up my mind to yield to the impulse and go abroad. My intention was to avoid cities, and, wandering from village to village, lay my soul bare to the healing influences of nature. As to any healing in the power of Time, I despised the old bald-pate as a quack who performed his seeming cures at the expense of the whole body. The better cures attributed to him are not his at all, but produced by the operative causes whose servant he is. A thousand holy balms require his services for their full action, but they, and not he, are the saving powers. Along with Time I ranked, and with absolute hatred shrunk from, all those means which offered to cure me by making me forget. From a child, I had a horror of forgetting; it always seemed to me like a loss of being, like a hollow scooped out of my very existence—almost like the loss of identity. At times I even shrunk from going to sleep, so much did it seem like yielding to an absolute death—a death so deep that the visible death is but a picture or type of it. If I could have been sure of dreaming, it would have been different, but in the uncertainty it seemed like consenting to nothingness. That one who thus felt should ever have been tempted to suicide, will reveal how painful if not valueless his thoughts and feelings—his conscious life—must have grown to him; and that the only thing which withheld him from it should be the fear that no death, but a more intense life might be the result, will reveal it yet more clearly. That in that sleep I might at least dream—there was the rub.

All such relief, in a word, as might come of a lowering of my life, either physically, morally, or spiritually, I hated, detested, despised. The man who finds solace for a wounded heart in self-indulgence,

may indeed be *capable* of angelic virtues, but in the meantime his conduct is that of the devils who went into the swine rather than be bodiless. The man who can thus be consoled for the loss of a woman, could never have been worthy of her, possibly would not have remained true to her beyond the first delights of possession. The relief to which I could open my door, must be such alone as would operate through the enlarging and elevating of what I recognized as *myself*. Whatever would make me greater, so that my torture, intensified it might well be, should yet have room to dash itself hither and thither without injuring the walls of my being, would be welcome. If I might become so great that, my grief yet stinging me to agony, the infinite *I* of me should remain pure and calm, God-loving and man-cherishing, then I should be saved. God might be able to do more for me—I could not tell: I looked for no more. I would myself be such as to inclose my pain in a mighty sphere of out-spacing life, in relation to which even such sorrow as mine should be but a little thing. Such deliverance alone, I say, could I consent with myself to accept, and such alone, I believed, would God offer me—for such alone seemed worthy of him, and such alone seemed not unworthy of me.

The help that Nature could give me, I judged to be of this ennobling kind. For either Nature was nature in virtue of having being born (*nata*) of God, or she was but a phantasm of my own brain—against which supposition the nature in me protested with the agony of a tortured man. To Nature then I would go. Like the hurt child who folds himself in the skirt of his mother's velvet garment, I would fold myself in the robe of Deity.

But to give honour and gratitude where both are due, I must here confess obligation with a willing and thankful heart. The "Excursion" of Wordsworth was published ere I was born, but only since I left college had I made acquaintance with it: so long does it take for the light of a new star to reach a distant world! To this book I owe so much that to me it would alone justify the conviction that Wordsworth will never be forgotten. That he is no longer the fashion, militates nothing against his reputation. We, the old ones, hold fast by him for no sentimental reminiscence of the fashion of our youth, but simply because his humanity has come into contact with ours. The men of the new generation have their new loves and worships: it remains to be seen to whom the worthy amongst them will turn long ere the frosts of age begin to gather and the winds of the human autumn to blow. Wordsworth will recede through the gliding ages until with the greater Chaucer, and the greater Shakspeare, and the greater Milton, he is yet a star in the constellated crown of England.

Before I was able to leave home, however, a new event occurred.

I received an anonymous letter, in a handwriting I did not recognize. Its contents were as follows:—

"Sir,—Treachery is intended you. If you have anything worth watching, *watch it*."

For one moment—so few were the places in which through my possessions I was vulnerable—I fancied the warning might point to Lilith, but I soon dismissed the idea. I could make no enquiries, for it had been left an hour before my return from a stroll by an unknown messenger. I could think of nothing besides but the register, and if this was what my correspondent aimed at, I had less reason to be anxious concerning it, because of the attested copy, than my informant probably knew. Still its safety was far from being a matter of indifference to me. I resolved to ride over to Umberden Church and see if it was as I had left it.

The twilight was fast thickening into darkness when I entered the gloomy building. There was light enough, however, to guide my hand to the right volume, and by carrying it to the door I was able to satisfy myself that it was as I had left it.

Thinking over the matter once more as I stood, I could not help wishing that the book were out of danger just for the present; but there was hardly a place in the bare church where it was possible to conceal it. At last I thought of one—half groped my way to the pulpit, ascended its creaking stair, lifted the cushion of the seat, and laid the book, which was thin, open in the middle, and flat on its face, under it. I then locked the door, mounted, and rode off.

It was now more than dusk. Lilith was frolicsome, and, rejoicing in the grass under her feet, broke into a quick canter along the noiseless, winding lane. Suddenly there was a great shock, and I lay senseless.

I came to myself under the stinging blows of a whip, only afterwards recognized as such however. I sprang staggering to my feet, and rushed at the dim form of an assailant, with such a sudden and I suppose unexpected assault that he fell under me. Had he not fallen I should have had little chance with him, for, as I now learned by his voice, it was Sir Geoffrey Brotherton.

"Thief! Swindler! Sneak!" he cried, making a last harmless blow at me as he fell.

All the wild beast in my nature was roused. I had no weapon—not even a whip, for Lilith never needed one. It was well, for what I might have done in the first rush of blood to my reviving brain, I dare hardly imagine. I seized him by the throat with such fury that, though far the stronger, he had no chance as he lay. I kneeled on his chest. He struggled furiously, but could not force my gripe from his throat. I soon perceived that I was strangling him, and tightened my grasp.

His efforts were already growing feebler, when I became aware of a soft touch apparently trying to take hold of my hair. Glancing up without relaxing my hold, I saw the white head of Lilith close

to mine. Was it the whiteness—was it the calmness of the creature—I cannot pretend to account for the fact, but the same instant before my mind's eye rose the vision of one standing speechless before his accusers, bearing on his form the marks of ruthless blows. I did not then remember that just before I came out I had been gazing, as I often gazed, upon an *Ecce Homo* of Albert Dürer's that hung in my room. Immediately my heart awoke within me. My whole being still trembling with passionate struggle and gratified hate, a rush of human pity swept across it. I took my hand from my enemy's throat, rose, withdrew some paces, and burst into tears. I could have embraced him, but I dared not even minister to him, for the insult it would appear. He did not at once rise, and when he did, he stood for a few moments, half-unconscious, I think, staring at me. Coming to himself, he felt for and found his whip—I thought with the intention of attacking me again, but he moved towards his horse, which was quietly eating the grass now wet with dew. Gathering its bridle from around its leg, he mounted, and rode back the way he had come.

I lingered for a while utterly exhausted. I was trembling in every limb. The moon rose and began to shed her low yellow light over the hazel copse, filling the lane with brightness and shadow. Lilith, seeming in her whiteness to gather a tenfold share of the light upon herself, was now feeding as gently as if she had known nothing of the strife, and I congratulated myself that the fall had not injured her. But as she took a step forward in her feeding, I discovered to my dismay that she was quite lame. For my own part I was now feeling the ache of numerous and severe bruises. When I took Lilith by the bridle to lead her away, I found that neither of us could manage more than two miles an hour. I was very uneasy about her. There was nothing for it however but make the best of our way to Gastford. It was no little satisfaction to think as we hobbled along, that the accident had happened through no carelessness of mine beyond that of cantering in the dark, for I was on my own side of the road. Had Geoffrey been on his, narrow as the lane was, we might have passed without injury.

It was so late when we reached Gastford, that we had to rouse the ostler before I could get Lilith attended to. I bathed the injured leg, of which the shoulder seemed wrenched; and having fed her, but less plentifully than usual, I left her to her repose. In the morning she was considerably better, but I resolved to leave her where she was, and, sending a messenger for Styles to come and attend to her, I hired a gig, and went to call on my new friend the rector of Umberden.

I told him all that had happened, and where I had left the volume. He said he would have a chest made in which to secure the whole register, and, meanwhile, would himself go to the church and bring that volume home with him. It is safe enough now, as any one may find who wishes to see it—though the old man has long passed away.

Lilith remained at Gastford a week before I judged it safe for her to come home. The injury however turned out to be a not very serious one.

Why should I write of my poor mare—but that she was once hers for whose hoped perusal I am writing this? No, there is even a better reason: I shall never, to all my eternity, forget, even if I should never see her again, which I do not for a moment believe, what she did for me that evening. Surely she deserves to appear in her own place in my story!

Of course I was exercised in my mind as to who had sent me the warning. There could be no more doubt that I had hit what it intended, and had possibly preserved the register from being once more tampered with. I could think only of one. I have never had an opportunity of inquiring, and for her sake I should never have asked the question, but I have little doubt it was Clara. Who else could have had a chance of making the discovery, and at the same time would have cared to let me know it? Also she would have cogent reason for keeping such a part in the affair a secret. Probably she had heard her father informing Geoffrey; but he might have done so with no worse intention than had informed his previous policy.

CHAPTER LXIV.

YET ONCE.

I AM drawing my story to a close. Almost all that followed bears so exclusively upon my internal history, that I will write but one incident more of it. I have roamed the world, and reaped many harvests. In the deepest agony I have never refused the consolations of Nature or of Truth. I have never knowingly accepted any founded in falsehood, in forgetfulness, or in distraction. Let such as have no hope in God drink of what Lethe they can find; to me it is a river of Hell and altogether abominable. I could not be content even to forget my sins. There can be but one deliverance from them, namely, that God and they should come together in my soul. In his presence I shall serenely face them. Without him I dare not think of them. With God a man can confront anything; without God, he is but the withered straw which the sickle of the reaper has left standing on a wintry field. But to forget them would be to cease and begin anew, which to one aware of his immortality is a horror.

If comfort profound as the ocean has not yet overtaken and unfolded me, I see how such may come—perhaps will come. It must be by the enlarging of my whole being in truth, in God, so as to give room for the storm to rage yet not destroy; for the sorrow to brood yet not kill; for the sunshine of love to return after the east wind and black frost of bitterest disappointment; for the heart to

feel the uttermost tenderness while the arms go not forth to embrace ; for a mighty heaven of the unknown, crowded with the stars of endless possibilities, to dawn when the sun of love has vanished, and the moon of its memory is too ghastly to give any light : it is comfort such and thence that I think will one day possess me. Already has not its aurora brightened the tops of my snow-covered mountains ? And if yet my valleys lie gloomy and forlorn, is not light on the loneliest peak a sure promise of the coming day ?

Only once again have I looked in Mary's face. I will record the occasion, and then drop my pen.

About five years after I left home, I happened in my wanderings to be in one of my favourite Swiss valleys—high and yet sheltered. I rejoiced to be far up in the mountains, yet behold the inaccessible peaks above me—mine, though not to be trodden by foot of mine—my heart's own, though never to yield me a moment's outlook from their lofty brows ; for I was never strong enough to reach one mighty summit. It was enough for me that they sent me down the glad streams from the cold bosoms of their glaciers—the offspring of the sun and the snow ; that I too beheld the stars to which they were nearer than I.

One lovely morning, I had wandered a good way from the village—a place little frequented by visitors, where I had a lodging in the house of the syndic—when I was overtaken by one of the sudden fogs which so frequently render those upper regions dangerous. There was no path to guide me back to my temporary home, but, a hundred yards or so beneath where I had been sitting, lay that which led down to one of the best known villages of the canton, where I could easily find shelter. I made haste to descend.

After a couple of hours' walking, during which the fog kept following me, as if hunting me from its lair, I at length arrived at the level of the valley, and was soon in one of those large hotels which in the summer are crowded as bee-hives, and in the winter forsaken as a ruin. The season for travellers was drawing to a close, and the house was full of homeward-bound guests.

For the mountains will endure but a season of intrusion. If travellers linger too long within their hospitable gates, their humour changes, and, with fierce winds and snow and bitter sleet, they will drive them forth, preserving their winter privacy for the bosom friends of their mistress, Nature. Many is the winter since those of my boyhood which I have spent amongst the Alps ; and in such solitude I have ever found the negation of all solitude, the one absolute Presence. David communed with his own heart on his bed and was still—there finding God : communing with my own heart in the winter-valleys of Switzerland I found at least what made me cry out : "Surely this is the house of God ; this is the gate of heaven !" I would not be supposed to fancy that God is in mountains and not in plains—that God is in the solitude and not in the city : in any region

harmonious with its condition and necessities, it is easier for the heart to be still, and in its stillness to hear the still small voice.

Dinner was going on at the *table d'hôte*. It was full, but a place was found for me in a bay window. Turning to the one side, I belonged to the great world, represented by the Germans, Americans, and English, with a Frenchman and Italian here and there, filling the long table; turning to the other, I knew myself in a temple of the Most High, so huge that it seemed empty of men. The great altar of a mighty mountain rose, massy as a world, and ethereal as a thought, into the upturned gulf of the twilight air—its snowy peak, ever as I turned to look, mounting up and up to its repose. I had been playing with my own soul, spinning it between the sun and the moon as it were, and watching now the golden and now the silvery side, as I glanced from the mountain to the table and again from the table to the mountain, when all at once I discovered that I was searching the mountain for something—I did not know what. Whether any tones had reached me, I cannot tell;—a man's mind may, even through his senses, be marvellously moved without knowing whence the influence comes;—but there I was searching the face of the mountain for something, with a want which had not begun to explain itself. From base to peak my eyes went flitting and resting and wandering again upwards. At last they reached the snowy crown, from which they fell into the infinite blue beyond. Then, suddenly, the unknown something I wanted was clear. The same moment, I turned to the table. Almost opposite was a face—pallid, with parted lips and fixed eyes—gazing at me. Then I knew those eyes had been gazing at me all the time I had been searching the face of the mountain. For one moment they met mine and rested; for one moment, I felt as if I must throw myself at her feet, and clasp them to my heart; but she turned her eyes away, and I rose and left the house.

The mist was gone, and the moon was rising. I walked up the mountain path towards my village. But long ere I reached it, the sun was rising; with his first arrow of slenderest light, the tossing waves of my spirit began to lose their white tops, and sink again towards a distant calm; and ere I saw the village from the first point of vision, I had made the following verses. They are the last I will set down.

I know that I cannot move thee
To an echo of my pain,
Or a thrill of the storming trouble
That racks my soul and brain;

That our hearts through all the ages
Shall never sound in tune;
That they meet no more in their cycles
Than the parted sun and moon.

But if ever a spirit flashes
Itself on another soul,

One day, in thy stillness, a vapour
 Shall round about thee roll;
 And the lifting of the vapour
 Shall reveal a world of pain,
 Of frosted suns, and moons that wander
 Through misty mountains of rain.
 Thou shalt know me for one live instant—
 Thou shalt know me—and yet not love:
 I would not have thee troubled,
 My cold, white-feathered dove.
 I would only once come near thee—
 Myself, and not my form;
 Then away in the distance wander,
 A slow-dissolving storm.
 The vision should pass in vapour,
 That melt in aether again;
 Only a something linger—
 Not pain, but the shadow of pain.
 And I should know that thy spirit
 On mine one look had sent;
 And glide away from thy knowledge,
 And try to be half-content.

CHAPTER LXV.

CONCLUSION.

THE ebbing tide that leaves bare the shore, swells the heaps of the central sea. The tide of life ebbs from this body of mine, soon to lie on the shore of life like a stranded wreck; but the murmur of the waters that break upon no strand is in my ears; to join the waters of the infinite life, mine is ebbing away.

Whatever has been his will is well—grandly well—well even for that in me which feared, and in those very respects in which it feared that it might not be well. The whole being of me past and present shall say: it is infinitely well, and I would not have it otherwise. Rather than it should not be as it is, I would go back to the world and this body of which I grew weary, and encounter yet again all that met me on my journey. Yes—final submission of my will to the All-will—I would meet it *knowing what was coming*. Lord of me, Father of Jesus Christ, will this suffice? Is my faith enough yet? I say it, not having beheld what thou hast in store—not knowing what I shall be—not even absolutely certain that thou art—confident only that, if thou be, such thou must be.

The last struggle is before me. But I have passed already through so many valleys of death itself, where the darkness was not only palpable, but choking and stinging, that I cannot greatly fear that which holds but the shadow of death. For what men call death, is but its shadow. Death never comes near us; it lies behind the back of

God; he is between it and us. If he were to turn his back upon us, the death which no imagination can shadow forth, would lap itself around us, and we should be—we should not know what.

At night I lie wondering how it will feel; and, but that God will be with me, I would rather be slain suddenly, than lie still and await the change. The growing weakness, ushered in, it may be, by long agony; the alienation from things about me, while I am yet amidst them; the slow rending of the bonds which make this body a home, so that it turns half alien, while yet some bonds unsevered hold the live thing fluttering in its worm-eaten cage—but God knows me and my house, and I need not speculate or forebode. When it comes, death will prove as natural as birth. Bethink thee. Lord—nay, thou never forgettest. It is because thou thinkest and feelest that I think and feel; it is on thy deeper consciousness that mine ever floats; thou knowest my frame, and rememberest that I am dust: do with me as thou wilt. Let me take centuries to die if so thou wilt, for thou wilt be with me. Only if an hour should come when thou must seem to forsake me, watch me all the time, lest self-pity should awake, and I should cry that thou wast dealing hardly with me. For when thou hidest thy face, the world is a corpse, and I am a live soul fainting within it.

* * * * *

Thus far had I written, and was about to close with certain words of Job which are to me like the trumpet of the resurrection, when the news reached me that Sir Geoffrey Brotherton was dead. He leaves no children, and the property is expected to pass to a distant branch of the family. Mary will have to leave Moldwarp Hall.

* * * * *

I have been up to London to my friend Marston—for it is years since Mr. Coningham died. I have laid everything before him, and left the affair in his hands. He is so confident in my cause, that he offers, in case my means should fail me, to find what is necessary himself; but he is almost as confident of a speedy settlement.

And now, for the first time in my life, I am about—shall I say, to court society? At least I am going to London, about to give and receive invitations, and cultivate the acquaintance of those whose appearance and conversation attract me.

I have not a single relative, to my knowledge, in the world, and I am free, beyond question, to leave whatever property I have or may have to whomsoever I please.

My design is this: if I succeed in my suit, I will offer Moldwarp to Mary for her lifetime. She is greatly beloved in the county, and has done much for the labourers, nor upon her own lands only. If she had the full power she would do yet better. But of course it is very doubtful whether she will accept it. Should she decline it, I shall try to manage it myself—leaving it to her, with reversion to the man, whoever he may be, whom I shall choose to succeed her.

What sort of man I shall endeavour to find, I think my reader will understand. I will not describe him, beyond saying that he must above all things be just, generous, and free from the petty prejudices of the country gentleman. He must understand that property involves service to every human soul that lives or labours upon it—the service of the elder brother to his less burdened yet more enduring and more helpless brothers and sisters; that for the lives of all such he has in his degree to render account. For surely God never meant to uplift any man *at the expense* of his fellows; but to uplift him that he might be strong to minister, as a wise friend and ruler, to their highest and best needs—first of all by giving them the justice which will be recognized as such by him before whom a man *is* his brother's keeper, and becomes a Cain in denying it.

Lest Lady Brotherton, however, should like to have something to give away, I leave my former will as it was. It is in Marston's hands.

* * * * *

Would I marry her now, if I might? I cannot tell. The thought rouses no passionate flood within me. Mighty spaces of endless possibility and endless result open before me. Death is knocking at my door.—

No—no; I will be honest, and lay it to no half reasons, however wise.—I would rather meet her then first, when she is clothed in that new garment called by St. Paul the spiritual body. That, Geoffrey has never touched; over that he has no claim.

But if the loveliness of her character should have purified his, and drawn and bound his soul to hers?

Father, fold me in thyself. The storm so long still, awakes; once more it flutters its fierce pinions. Let it not swing itself aloft in the air of my spirit. I dare not think, not merely lest thought should kindle into agony, but lest I should fail to rejoice over the lost and found. But my heart is in thy hand. Need I school myself to bow to an imagined decree of thine? Is it not enough that, when I shall know a thing for thy will, I shall then be able to say: Thy will be done? It is not enough; I need more. School thou my heart so to love thy will, that in all calmness I leave to think what may or may not be its choice, and rest in its holy self.

* * * * *

She has sent for me. I go to her. I will not think beforehand what I shall say.

Something within tells me that a word from her would explain all that sometimes even now seems so inexplicable as hers. Will she speak that word? Shall I pray her for that word? I know nothing. The pure Will be done!

JERSEY.

THE visit which we (X., Y., and Z.) paid to Jersey was the wind-up of a holiday, the greater part of which was spent in Normandy; our object being to see whether we should sufficiently care for the place to go to it a second time, and for a more lengthened stay. We had long desired to see something of the Channel Islands; but from the nearest English point of view they seem a long way off. The passage is proverbially a rough one, and takes from nine to twelve hours on board the steamer. So, finding that, by payment of an extra eight shillings each, our return tickets from Southampton to Havre, St. Malo, Granville, or Cherbourg were also available from Jersey, we made up our minds to spend a few days there on our way home, and started one morning by the steamer *Alice* from St. Malo.

The previous night had been stormy, and the short waves of a deep green, crested with white foam, dashed noisily against the numerous rocky projections, through which our way was steered while steaming out of the picturesque old port of St. Malo.

One by one the little islands grew smaller, the fortifications standing on some of them faded away, and we were regularly "at sea." After this a by no means rare peculiarity of my bodily organisation unfortunately prevents me from saying whether there is anything more to be seen; at all events, I saw nothing more until we were alongside the pier at St. Helier's, where we were to land.

Cabs, omnibuses, and flies stand in waiting to take travellers and their luggage to the different hotels. Idlers in pretty, gay dresses, in yachting-suits and uniforms, mingle with those in less attractive garments, all eagerly watching the new arrivals. We had been recommended to go to the Imperial Hotel, and thither we drove; and, after what seemed an interminable jolting through streets and roads, we reached the mistakenly-placed erection. It is one of those large handsome buildings, which belong to a company, has no proper master or mistress, and where everything is done on such a large scale that one is oppressed by a sense of one's own insignificance. These are its general faults; its particular one is, that in a place where most people go to be near the sea, it is not within sight nor even moderate walking distance of it. The charges are 10s. per head daily, and this entitled us to a bed-room, an exceedingly substantial breakfast, a meat luncheon, a not over-plentiful nor well-arranged dinner, tea or coffee, and the use of a general drawing-room

and reading-room, well supplied with newspapers. But we wanted the sea; and, therefore, started as early as possible the morning after our arrival, to ascertain how we could best obtain a dwelling near to the desired element.

Seeing that almost every house we passed had a notice of lodgings to let, we decided that if we could find any vacant in a locality that pleased us, we would take apartments in preference to staying at a hotel. Havre-des-Pas was the part we were recommended to, and no sooner did we emerge out of Roseville Street, and catch sight of the magnificent sea, which came rolling into the bay, than we agreed that, if possible, this was the place to pitch our tents in. There were not very many houses near, but, after a little inquiry, we came upon the very thing we wanted—a bright house, with a nicely-furnished drawing-room, and two comfortable bed-rooms, all on one floor. The windows commanded a perfect view of St. Clement's Bay, while stretching away inland were corn-fields, green meadows, and clumps of trees sheltering pretty country-houses. On inquiring for terms, the landlady told us rather dubiously that she had been getting 26s. a week for the rooms, but that would include everything—there would be no extras; and so it proved, for, agreeing to her request at once, we had everything excellently cooked and scrupulously clean, were attentively served and pleasantly waited upon, for 26s. a-week. And, while on the subject of lodgings, I may as well say, that throughout the island they seem wonderfully cheap. One lady told me she had three excellent rooms for 20s. a week; and while looking for those apartments, she had been offered some for 18s. and 15s.; these were near the water, but had no sea-view. I could but think, what a delightful place this is for people not overburdened with money to bring a family of children to;—excellent bathing, miles of sand and rocks to scramble over, and provisions good and moderate to satisfy the healthy appetites they would be sure to return with. How preferable to most of the over-crowded watering-places, with their pokey rooms and exorbitant prices!

In purchasing anything in Jersey, one must always bear in mind that one gets thirteen pennies for the English shilling, and that the weights are somewhat in excess of our own. Meat is very little cheaper than it is in London; it averages 11d. and 1s. the pound, but it is neither so well trimmed nor so good as London meat. Of course, I am giving a stranger's experience to those who, if they went, would doubtless be treated as I was. Fowls—not chickens—were 2s. 6d. each; ducks, 5s. 6d. the couple. The vegetables were excellent, and just half the price of those we get in London; the fruit not so cheap in proportion, but very good.

The market of St. Helier's is quite a sight. Comely matrons and pretty, bright girls, each with a useful-sized canoe-shaped basket,

buying and bargaining for their household wants; while behind the stalls sit the half-foreign looking market-women, answering their customers in queer-sounding broken English, and gossiping together in as queer-sounding Jersey-French. Besides this market there is a fish-market, and a market for the sale of French provisions.

The principal streets of St. Helier's are clean, tolerably wide, and full of well-stocked shops of every description. There is an indescribable air of freshness and gaiety about the place and the people, and I know of few towns which struck me as looking so clean and thriving. It is quite pleasant to go into a shop, the people are so obliging, and ready to give you any information you may desire; and the many pretty faces usually to be found inside impel one to linger and prosecute inquiries. After the shops are closed, the streets seem to become a regular promenade, but all is orderly, and every one is out with the apparent intention of enjoyment.

Finding there was a railway to St. Aubin's, one of our first excursions was by it, and very much we enjoyed our short journey. The carriages are comfortable and of the usual size; but outside them is sufficient space railed on each side to admit of a person walking the entire length of the train, and so enjoying the sea, which the line skirts the whole distance. As there are several stations between St. Helier's and St. Aubin's, this arrangement prevents the necessity of having a long platform and the awkwardness of descending should your carriage be drawn up beyond it. Arrived at St. Aubin's, which, compared with St. Helier's, is a mere village, but most charmingly situated, we set off for a long walk across some high land, and down to St. Brelade's Bay. The day was warm; but the lanes are everywhere well shaded, and, once upon the hill-top, the breeze came cool and fresh; the corn looked thick, and its golden hue was becoming deeper and more burnished. Farther on we crossed heath, low brambles, and thick sedge grass, through which large green lizards glided away at our approach, and then we gradually descended to the bay, stopping at the garden of a farmhouse to stare in wonderment at, what appeared to us, a group of Brobdignagian cabbages. From these are made the famous cabbage-sticks, which we were told are peculiar to the island. They seem to be grown by every one, and look, and in fact are, a large-leaved, tough, coarse kind of cabbage, with stalks varying from three to four feet. When converted into sticks, they are sold for 1s. each, and a brisk trade must be driven in them, as the shopkeeper, of whom Y. bought some, told him he had sold more than two thousand that season.

All the sea-views around Jersey are so beautiful, that no description can in any way convey an idea of them, nor would a picture do them justice. The colour of the sea seems to vary with each passing cloud, the rocks that at one hour look purple, at another look grey—thus you never seem to view the same scene twice; for a rising storm, or

a dazzling sun will at once change the whole aspect of the landscape. Returning to St. Aubin's, we walked through the grounds of Noirmont Manor, one of the most picturesquely-situated houses I have ever seen, with grounds sloping down to the very water's edge, and art so skilfully dovetailed into nature, that it is hard to say where one ends and the other begins. We passed many other pretty houses of smaller pretension, all with gardens gay with flowers—fuchsias, myrtles, and roses twining up about them after the fashion one sees in some parts of Devonshire. I am not sure but that I should give the preference for a long stay to St. Aubin's rather than to St. Helier's, only the latter place affords far greater facilities for seeing the whole island. This may be accomplished in six days, at the rate of twenty miles a day (of course, a certain portion of the ground is retraced during these six excursions), and for the absurdly moderate charge of 2s. each person. A list of these pleasure-trips is left at most of the lodging-houses, and from it you make choice of what places you wish to see. We chose to pay a visit to the caves of Grève-de-Leeq, and started off at ten o'clock one morning for the office of the Royal Blue Excursion Cars. These cars are long open conveyances, with six rows of seats cross-wise, each wide enough to seat five persons. They are drawn by four horses, and are sufficiently high to admit of one seeing over all obstacles in the form of high walls and hedges. Three of these cars started, all tolerably well filled with people, who were evidently, like ourselves, strangers to the place. With us went a guide, to point out the various places of interest we passed. He was a most amusing person, and indefatigable in his efforts to promote the cheerfulness of the party, going from one car to the other, repeating jokes, telling stories, and giving riddles. I fear he was not at all appreciated by several of his hearers; but he amused us considerably, and when Y., in return, told him one or two fresh things, he laughed with a heartiness that showed he had a lively sense of humour.

We reached Grève-de-Leeq about one o'clock, and found an excellent luncheon provided in a long room built opposite the small hotel, for the accommodation of pleasure-parties. Here were set before us chicken, ham, cold joints of every description, delicious lobster, and salad, for 2s. 6d.; and, having refreshed ourselves from this liberal *menu*, we started to see the soldiers, who were encamped on the heights, and then to wander about until our guide should be ready to conduct us to the caves, which are only to be seen at low water. The day was very warm, and the hill exceedingly steep, causing X. (who occasionally would remind us that she was not so young as she used to be) to stand somewhat breathless on the first flat big enough to allow a tent to be pitched, in front of which was lying a young officer, who, divining the envious glance poor X. cast upon his comfortable ease, good-naturedly jumped up, and asked her if would she like to rest there. The view was lovely,

the breeze delicious, the young officer had lots of cushions, and, before we had time to debate, X. was seated. She was easily persuaded that to go to the caves would be for her a most fatiguing expedition, and that the best plan, if Y. and myself were bent on seeing them, was not to wait for the excursion guide, but to trust ourselves to a soldier standing near, while our new acquaintance would entertain her until our return. And, certainly, we can never thank him enough for his kindness; for what we should have done with any one not able to jump, slide, and scramble up and down, I know not. We descended by a jagged rock covered with short slippery grass; then a bare projection, down which the man told us to drop. This was sufficiently difficult for Y. and him, but, as for me, I hung in mid-air, and had finally to drop with the hope of perching my feet on poor Y.'s shoulders. "There ain't much more of this sort o' thing," said our cheery guide; "we'll soon be at the cave's mouth now." Whereupon I made a final effort at dashing myself to pieces, and was landed on a sharp rock, one among many bigger and sharper still, which were piled together under the shadow of the overhanging cliffs, and beaten against by a noisy dash of sea waves.

"We must look sharp, or the tide 'll overtake us," said our guide, emerging from a hole into which he had been peering, while I was taking in my surroundings and a little fresh courage, which Y. was endeavouring to impart to me.

"Where are we to go?" asked Y.

"In here," said the soldier, pointing to the place he had been inspecting.

"What, that hole?" cried I, in dismay.

"Ah, it isn't so bad as it looks," replied our friend. "Besides," he added, as a clincher to his inducements, "ye can't go back; and if we stand here much longer, we'll have the tide upon us."

So there was nothing more to be said, and bending down until we were almost on our hands and knees, we crawled into a dark tunnel, the water dripping on us from the top and sides, the whole way almost blocked up with stones and pieces of rock, varying in size and shape, over which we had to step or climb. At length we were told to sit down on a stone higher and more pointed than the rest, and turn ourselves round, and, to my delight, for the first time I beheld a glimmer of light, by which I knew we were nearing the other end. In a few minutes more we were sitting on a beach of goodly-sized pebbles, I all but exhausted by the exertion I had undergone. Our fellow-labourer, however, urged us to proceed, as we could hear the voices of the excursion guide and his party close after us.

The only ascent is by irregular and half-worn steps cut in the face of a perpendicular rock, and up these, step by step, Y. and our conductor hoisted and dragged me until the top was at last reached, and our perils were over.

I have done the usual amount of climbing of ordinary Swiss tourists, have ascended Scotch and Welsh mountains, but certainly I never came across a more ugly bit; and both Y. and our friend the soldier agreed with me that it would be but right to warn people, as a false step or a sudden giddiness would prove serious, if not fatal.

Familiarity had evidently made the Royal Blue Guide (or R. B. G., as he called himself) lose sight of the perils into which he was leading his followers, and as we sat resting on the top we could hear his cheery voice calling out encouragingly, "This way, gentlemen! Higher up! higher up!"

"Higher up, indeed!" exclaimed a rather portly member of the party, sinking down near us; "he ought to be prosecuted for bringing people to such a place."

"Is it on the top I am?" said an evidently raw recruit, whose face and coat were about the same shade of colour. "Shure, bad luck to me if I'm iver cotched crawlin' through that hole agin'."

"Why, Pat, I thought you'd bin in once before?" said our conductor.

"Well, I did go in, but I didn't come out, for the cause that I took down a candle with me, and when I got two or three steps on, me foot slipped from under me, and I fell, and just squelched out the light, and there I was, not knowin' what I'd do or what would happen to me, for I was all alone, ye see; but I managed to slider back, and get up again, and I've niver bin since, barrin' to-day, and be jabers, I've had enuf o' the world's inside to last me me life."

After assuring himself that his party were all safely up, the guide joined us; but he only laughed at our remonstrances, saying we should find it do us all the good in the world. He did generally tell the ladies that it was a stiffish bit, but a good many were only the more anxious to go after they heard that, and *he* took care they came back safe. "So far so good;" but unless you are strong in head, body, and breath, take my advice, and be contented with the really splendid view from the heights above. Standing on them, you can see the island of Sark—a place, judging from the photographs of it, well worth a day's visit, and to which, in the summer time, steamers constantly make excursions. The French coast, near Cherbourg, is also visible, and on the rocks below, the sea, restless and tossing even on a calm day, beats a constant splash-plash. X.'s obliging entertainer told us that a storm there was a grand sight, though rather trying to those under canvas, as during the last one his tent had been blown away, and his bed soaked with water, and he left to spend the remainder of the night as best he could. He only laughed at these small calamities, however, seeming to be one of those happy individuals who remember only the pleasant incidents of life. We were very sorry to say good-bye to him, and X. had

much to tell us of the German campaign, through which, as one of the Irish brigade, he had gone.

We returned home by a different road, through most lovely lanes, arched by trees. The Jersey lanes are wonderfully pretty, and excited our admiration whenever we turned into one; when closed in by high hedges, which are a tangle of brushwood and wild flowers, with thick trees shading the sun and softening down the light, it is impossible to realise that you are quite close to the sea, and that you will probably emerge on a road only separated by a rough embankment from a splendid beach. This constant and varied change of scenery I think constitutes the great charm of Jersey.

St. Clement's Bay, which, from being close to our lodgings, was the one I became best acquainted with, is carpeted with fine soft sand, spreading out and around a very forest of fantastically-shaped rocks, which are completely hidden at high water. On the beach stands a sufficient supply of bathing-machines, and a small establishment for hot and cold baths. Public bathing is conducted on the same plan as in England; the only restrictions applying to time, and not to any especial costume, as in France; indeed, the absence of the French element in a place where twenty years ago almost every family talked in Jersey-French, is very noticeable. Fashions are set forth as "worn in London;" and advertisements of English goods are remarkably prominent. I tried to procure several articles in the shape of French boots, parasols, and gloves, &c., but I could not obtain them; and this not, as I inferred, from the recent disturbed intercourse, but, as I was informed by the persons to whom I applied, from the slight demand for foreign goods.

During the late war Jersey was a great place of refuge for French families, and through the past winter the whole island had been crowded with them, but when we were there, few or none remained, and the only French people we saw were some sailors and market-women, with white caps turned up at the ears, after the fashion of St. Malo, selling fruit and butter. Jersey butter is, by the way, delicious both to sight and taste; it is of a rich creamy yellow, and is made in pounds of, I believe, eighteen or twenty ounces; certainly, it looks a much bigger pound than we are used to, and for it we were charged 1s. 5d. Tea is among the cheap commodities. I saw it constantly marked at 1s. and 1s. 6d. the lb., and was told that was a usual price for ordinary drinking tea. Spirits of every kind are in price much below what we pay in England; we bought very fair brandy for 1s. 6d. the bottle. Lemonade and ginger-beer are sent to you at 1s. the dozen. Grapes grow in great abundance, and there were several famous vineries which we regretted being unable to visit. Early in August the grapes were scarce, and very dear, yet we bought some magnificent black indoor fruit at 2s. the pound.

The climate is somewhat warmer than ours; but the proximity of the sea prevents one feeling the heat to be excessive. In the middle of the day nothing is more pleasant than a rock-shadowed seat on the sands, where you can idly watch the old women and girls toiling away, utterly regardless of the sun's rays, busily collecting seaweed, which they dry and burn as fuel, and carefully collecting the ashes, to keep or sell for manure.

Fish seemed very scarce during our stay, and our landlady told us it was never over-plentiful. During two or three nights, when the moon was at its height, we were awakened by a great shouting and singing from parties returning from a lance-catching expedition; and in several shops in St. Helier's I noticed quantities of these little fish tied up in bundles like dried sprats; but I should fancy the coast too rocky and dangerous for fishing on any extensive scale.

One of our drives was to Mont Orgueil Castle; the road we took skirted the sea, and all along are built round martello towers. As we approached that part of the coast which lay opposite France, the distance between these towers so diminished that they appeared almost within hailing distance of each other. They are no longer apt for purposes of defence, but are rented out as storehouses for different materials.

The coast of France looks so near to Gorey, that we could hardly credit our driver's assertion, that thirteen miles lay between us and the white shores opposite.

At Gorey we alighted and walked up the hill to the castle, which is certainly one of the most interesting relics of the past that the island possesses. In the days of the Black Prince the famous Constable Du Guesclin tried vainly to wrest it from the English. Charles II. for some time resided here, and here Prynne was imprisoned. It is most picturesquely situated, and is still far too substantial-looking to be thought or called a ruin, although grass grows thick in windows and doorways; goats were browsing on its battlements, and boys played hide-and-seek among its once dread dungeons. We lingered a long time about the fine old ivy-covered place, inspecting the little chapel, the prison, and a deep and curious well. Then we returned to have another look at the magnificent sea-view with which the castle is surrounded,—northward lie Anne Port, St. Catharine's Bay, and Archirondel Tower; to the south, Gorey, with its substantial-looking houses and pier; Grouville Bay, and its long tract of common land, on which during the month of July the races are held. The air about Gorey seems more bracing than in any other part of the island, and we were told that it is much colder there than elsewhere. Our homeward road lay across the common past St. Clement's Church, prettily enshrouded in trees, down again to the coast-side, finally passing Marine Terrace, where our driver told us Victor Hugo had formerly resided.

We spent one Sunday in Jersey, and were much struck with the number of churches and chapels in St. Helier's. Every denomination seemed to be represented, and we were told that besides nine established churches most other religious persuasions had two and three places of worship.

Being near, we had a look at Victoria College, built to commemorate the Queen's visit to Jersey. It is a handsome building, prominently situated, and in it boys get a good and inexpensive education.

We returned to our lodgings by a road which skirts the foot of Fort Regent, a fortress built on an eminence rising abruptly from the water's edge. Cut round it is a pathway, from which at one point we got a magnificent view. On one side lay the town of St. Helier's, with its background of wooded heights; St. Aubin's Bay, in which stands the old fortress Elizabeth Castle, so named after the Queen in whose reign it was built; and, on the other side, the network of rocks which stretch away into St. Clement's Bay. It is a view to store up in one's memory, and would alone almost repay the trouble and difficulty of the watery transit.

When the time came to turn our faces homeward, we left Jersey with much regret, wishing we could have stayed long enough to explore the numerous beauties, which the cursory glance we had been able to take assured us would repay us at every turn. To any one who loves the sea sufficiently to take pleasure in wandering by its shores, listening to its drowsy roll or restless dash, clambering its jagged rocks, and poking among and peering into its weedy thickets, a sojourn at Jersey will prove a season of rest. All this, together with pleasant walks, drives, and healthful excursions, deliciously mild air, and cool sea breezes, comfortable apartments, and excellent provisions, may be enjoyed at a very moderate cost. After we left the hotel, we remained a week, during which time the apartments, food, excursions, and carriage-hire for three persons came to £5. We left Jersey between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, and it was close upon seven o'clock in the evening before we found ourselves at the Southampton station platform, waiting for the train which was to carry us back to London. There is no denying that the voyage is a tedious one; but all that can be done on board the steamer to alleviate discomfort is done, by providing nicely-arranged seats on deck, a comfortable airy cabin below, and a most attentive stewardess. In addition to all this, having fortified myself with a dose of Hunter's Chloral, I safely bade defiance to my old enemy sea-sickness.

L. P.

SOME ENGLISHMEN TO SIR CHARLES DILKE.

A SONNET.

On modern Pallas, male and terrible !

Athéné's nursling, who, brought up within

Her robe, art sure that never lion's skin

Clad less than lion ! We, who doubt, are dull

And vile, and wit and virtue must down-pull

The blunder'd Britain of our folly and sin.

But learn this lesson, boy, ere thou begin :

That throne alone is empty which is full.

Th' uncover'd heads of nations do but dare

The stroke of earth and Heaven. To cure a crown

Long since our dauntless England put it on.

And, come the world in arms, she still shall wear

The golden helmet which her wisdom won,

On brows that fools and knaves and maniacs would lay bare.

SYDNEY DOBELL.

THE APPROACHING ECLIPSE.

THE eclipse of this month occupies a somewhat exceptional position. It is the last of a series of important total eclipses of the sun following each other at comparatively short intervals, and each (thus far) distinguished by some noteworthy accession to our knowledge. Between the eclipse of June, 1860, and that of August, 1868, very little was added to our information respecting those solar phenomena which are visible during total eclipses. Of course the sun was totally eclipsed more than once during that interval, but either the circumstances of such eclipses were unfavourable, or else the regions where they could be viewed were so situated as to preclude the possibility of forming well-organised observing parties. The great Indian eclipse of August, 1868, terminated this long period of inaction. Then came the important American eclipse of August, 1869; and next, the so-called Mediterranean eclipse of December, 1870. During all these eclipses very striking discoveries were made. It remains to be seen whether the eclipse of the present month will supply the means of so supplementing those discoveries as to satisfy the craving minds of astronomers during the next twenty-eight months. It is in any case certain that during the interval just named no eclipses will occur which will be worth the trouble of observing in the systematic and expensive manner justified by the circumstances of the recent eclipses.

My present purpose is chiefly to indicate the nature of the hopes entertained by astronomers respecting the approaching eclipse, as well as the position to which the observation of the eclipsed sun has already led the students of solar physics. But the opportunity is a favourable one for a brief consideration of the laws according to which solar eclipses succeed each other.

We are apt to regard the prediction of eclipses, and eclipses generally, as among the most mysterious of all the subjects with which astronomers have to deal, and in one view of the matter this is not very far from the truth. Certainly the processes by which the exact circumstances of eclipses are determined years before they occur, are among the most surprising developments of the powers of the human mind which the whole body of science makes us acquainted with. But the general laws of eclipses are not particularly abstruse—certainly not so abstruse as to account for the perplexity with which the subject is very commonly regarded.

I am inclined sometimes to think that our books on astronomy are

not always strictly fair to their readers. Something must always be taken for granted in popular treatises, while other matters are selected for special consideration. But it seems to me, with all deference to the authors of our original treatises on astronomy, that they sometimes discuss far too thoroughly certain matters which the general reader cares very little about, while, on the other hand, they occasionally take for granted and leave unexplained just those matters which the student is best able, as well as most anxious, to comprehend.

Eclipses certainly seem to me to be a case in point. There is something amusing—so at least I conceive—in the elaborate care with which the student of the noblest of all sciences is informed that an opaque body can cast a shadow, and that this shadow will have such and such characteristics. I am not here speaking of elementary treatises. It is reasonable enough, perhaps, in a first book for children to explain that “when the moon stops the sun’s light its shadow falls on a part of the earth,” and that “the people who live on that particular part of the earth where the shadow falls cannot see the sun because the moon is in the way.” This is very pleasing and instructive for very small people; but when in treatises of a higher class the student is gravely informed of these things, as though they involved entirely new and striking conceptions, the idea is suggested that astronomers think but lightly of the capacity of those who chance not to have made astronomy their chief subject of inquiry.

On the other hand, the points about which most readers would care to hear something are commonly left untouched. Scarcely any reader of the usual explanation of eclipses fails to feel interested in the question of the laws according to which the moon comes between the sun and the earth, or the earth between the sun and the moon. The student feels that it may be very well to show him the consequences which follow when these bodies assume particular positions; but that he would also like to know a little about the causes of their becoming so placed, as well as of the laws according to which the sequence of such events is determined.

We are thus led to a mode of considering the subject which is very generally useful in the study of astronomy. I cannot, indeed, too earnestly recommend the student of the science to employ this method at every opportunity. It consists in imagining oneself placed at some suitable standpoint whence all the movements of such and such celestial bodies may be watched.

In this case, the proper standpoint is the sun himself, and the bodies to be watched in imagination are the earth and moon. The student must picture to himself this earth on which we live, as a small globe circling around his standpoint once in a year. He must conceive this globe as no larger in appearance than any one of the planets as seen from the earth. He would, indeed, require a good

telescope to see the earth (from his place on the sun) actually as a globe. Now let him further conceive that around this small globe a much smaller orb is circling once in rather more than four weeks; but that the direction in which he looks at the circular path of the smaller orb is always such that this orb seems to travel backwards and forwards across or close past the larger one. To show exactly how long this path would look as seen from the sun, as well as to illustrate other points of interest connected with this explanation, the following process may be employed. Let the reader draw a circle ten and three-quarter inches in diameter to represent the sun or moon as we see these orbs. At the centre of this circle draw a small one, one-tenth of an inch in diameter; this will represent the earth as seen from the sun. Three inches from this small circle set another, a fortieth of an inch in diameter; this will represent the moon as seen from the sun when at her greatest range of distance from the earth. Exactly on the opposite side of the little circle representing the earth, and three inches from that circle, set another little picture of the moon; this represents the moon as seen from the sun when at her greatest range of distance from the earth on the other side. The observer in the sun would see the moon pass backwards and forwards from one position to the other in rather more than four weeks. In thus moving backwards and forwards the moon passes always close (in appearance) to the earth, but sometimes closer than at others, and sometimes right across or right behind the earth's face. The path, in fact, opens out into an oval whose greatest width, on our scale, is slightly more than five-tenths of an inch, then closes up, then opens out to the same degree, only tilted the other way, then closes up again, and so on continually, while the earth all the time is circling round the observer's standpoint once in a year, and the moon round her path (thus varying in aspect)* once in twenty-nine and a half days. Speaking roughly, we may say that once a fortnight the imagined observer in the sun would see the moon crossing the earth's place. He would *always* see the moon close to the earth, since we have seen that the whole length of the moon's path, as seen from the sun, is much less than the breadth of the sun's globe as we see it; but twice in a month the moon would be *very* close by the earth.

Now our observer in the sun would see that the moon's path passed from its greatest opening to a seeming line, and thence to its

* Of course the path is not a real entity, and could not therefore be seen, as supposed. It is convenient, however, to regard it as such. We may thus compare it to the outer rim of Saturn's ring-system; and precisely as we see that ring-system closing up and opening out systematically in the course of about twenty-nine years, so certainly an observer on the sun, watching our moon's course, would find her path opening out and closing up systematically in the course of eleven months eleven days, the seeming length of the path remaining appreciably unchanged, and about equal to three-fifths of the seeming diameter of the sun as seen from the earth.

greatest opening again (but with opposite tilt) in five months and about three weeks; passing back to a seeming line and to its original opening again, in all respects as at first, in the same time. Eleven months and eleven days complete the whole set of changes. When the path seemed most open the moon would not at any time actually cross the earth's face, or pass actually behind it. In other words, the moon would neither hide any part of the earth from the sun nor be hidden by the earth. Hiding any parts of the earth from the sun means obviously eclipsing the sun as viewed from those parts of the earth; while to say the moon is hidden from the sun by the earth means (no less obviously) that the moon is thrown into shadow, or eclipsed. So that when the moon's path, as seen from the sun, is most open—forming then a long oval—there can be no eclipses either of the sun or moon. But when this path has in appearance closed up to a line, or nearly to a line, the moon can no longer pass by the earth (as viewed from the sun) without actually crossing the earth's disc or passing actually behind that disc. So long as this state of things lasts there must be an eclipse whenever the moon's backward and forward motion carries her past the earth. We have seen that the moon's path has this aspect, or is closed up into a straight line, as seen from the sun, at intervals of about five months and three weeks. For rather more than a month the path is sufficiently closed for eclipses to occur. I have suggested for these occasions the title of "eclipse months." To show how they succeed each other, take the following illustrative instance:—Let January in any year be an eclipse month, the middle of January being the time when the moon's path appears closed up into a line as seen from the sun. Then five months and three weeks later, or about the 6th of July, the path is again closed up into a line as seen from the sun; and a period of rather more than a month, having this date for its middle—or from about June 22 to about July 23—is again an "eclipse month." Passing on from July 6, we reach in five months and three weeks, the date December 27, which is the middle of the next "eclipse month." And so on continually.

Other matters connected with the recurrence and peculiarities of these "eclipse months" belong, or should belong, to treatises on astronomy. What has been said above suffices for my present purpose,—which is to explain the sequence of the late eclipses. It will be observed that about eleven months and eleven days separate an eclipse month in one year from the corresponding eclipse month in the next. We thus see why the great Indian eclipse of August, 1868, had its analogues, so to speak, in the total eclipse of August 29, in the preceding year, and in the American eclipse of August 7, 1869. These three eclipses, occurring eleven days earlier in each succeeding year, were all three total. But the series did not end with the eclipse of August, 1869. On July 27, 1870 (again eleven days earlier) there

was an eclipse of the sun. It was, however, only a partial one, and closed the series.

Now the eclipse of the present month belongs to another series. It will be remembered by every one that there was an eclipse on December 22, last year; that eclipse was the first of the series to which the approaching eclipse belongs. This series, like the former, includes four eclipses. Last December the moon as seen from the sun crossed the earth's face near its northern edge. In the eclipse of Tuesday, December 12, the moon, as supposed to be seen from the sun, will pass slightly to the north of the middle point of the earth's face.* Thus the eclipse will be more important than that of last year, and the length of the actual track of the moon's shadow considerably greater. The third eclipse of the series will occur on November 30, 1872. In one respect it will be one of the most remarkable ever recorded; for it must be described as at once an annular and a total eclipse of the sun. This is readily explained, though the occurrence is altogether exceptional. The reader is aware that the point of the moon's conical shadow sometime extends beyond and sometimes falls short of the earth. In the former case an eclipse is total, in the latter it is annular. But in the eclipse of November 30, 1872, the apex of the shadow falls short of the earth's surface at the beginning of the eclipse; it encounters the earth as the shadow-track passed onward towards the bulging central part of the earth's illuminated hemisphere; and presently, towards the close of the eclipse, falls again short of the earth's surface. So that there are two points on the earth's surface where, on November 30, 1872, the eclipse will be exactly total, the moon just hiding the sun and no more, and only for a single instant. The totality will nowhere last more than about three-quarters of a minute; and as the place where this will happen lies very far south in the Pacific Ocean, it is not likely that any observer will witness this eclipse. It is, however, the most considerable solar eclipse of the year 1872. The last eclipse of the series occurs on November 19, 1873, and, like the last of the former series, it is altogether unimportant. The moon, as supposed to be seen from the sun, will just graze the most southerly part of the earth's disc. "The circumstances of the eclipse are such," says the Nautical Almanac, "that a map has not been considered requisite." There will be no total solar eclipse at all in 1873.

* It is a singular circumstance that the earth will present almost exactly the same face towards the sun at the moment of central eclipse on the 12th inst., as at the middle of the transit of Venus, on December 8, 1874. The fifteen pictures of the rotating earth, in Plate VIII. of my treatise on the sun, illustrate the approaching eclipse as exactly as though drawn for the purpose. The first shows the earth's face as seen from the sun just before the moon's passage begins; the next thirteen show the earth's face at successive intervals of a quarter of an hour during the progress of the eclipse; and the last shows the earth's face as seen from the sun just after the moon has passed off that face.

Not until April 16, 1874, will any total eclipse worth observing take place, after the eclipse of the present month. Nor are the circumstances of the eclipse of 1874 such as to encourage favourable hopes that much will be learned during its progress. On April 6, 1875, there will be, I believe, a much more important eclipse visible (as I judge from a rough calculation) in America; but I shall probably be excused from entering into an exact calculation of its circumstances, more especially as the Nautical Almanac for 1875 will, I believe, be published before this essay appears.

It will be inferred that a considerable degree of interest is attached by astronomers to the eclipse of the present month, followed as it will be by two years and four months during which there will be no solar eclipses worthy of special observation.

Although the eclipse of the 12th inst. is not nearly so favourable for observational purposes as the great Indian eclipse of 1868, yet there is a considerable variety as respects the choice of stations. In fact there are no less than four distinct sections of the moon's shadow-track to which it has been judged advisable to send observers. The track crosses the southern extremity of the Indian peninsula, and along this part of its course there will probably be several observing parties, the arrangements being superintended by Mr. Pogson, the Government Astronomer at Madras, and by Colonel Tennant and Captain Herschel, both known to fame through their observations during the great eclipse of 1868. Thence the shadow-track passes to the northern part of Ceylon, and along this part of its course the English eclipse expedition will be stationed. It will probably be in the remembrance of most of my readers that the English Government granted (several months back) the sum of £2,000, as well as transport and the means of camping, for an expedition to Ceylon. It was hoped that Professor Stokes would have been able to take charge of this expedition; but these hopes were disappointed. Mr. Lockyer, however, has been able to give his services, and doubtless the expedition will be a highly effective one. The shadow-track passes from Ceylon to Java, where a French party under M. Janssen will be stationed. Lastly, the shadow-track passes to the northern part of the Australian continent, and a strong observing party has proceeded from Sydney and Melbourne to the stations along this part of the shadow's course.

The totality will last longest in North Australia, where its duration will be more than four minutes, or nearly two minutes longer than the duration of the eclipse of last year at the best stations. In Java the totality will last more than three minutes. In Ceylon the duration of totality will barely exceed by a few seconds the duration of totality last December. A somewhat curious mistake was made on this point in a scientific journal. Mr. Hind, in his first and comparatively rough estimate of the course traversed by the moon's shadow, had placed Trincomalee on the border of the track, so that the duration

of totality at Trincomalee would have been very short. But after his final and more elaborate calculation, he set Trincomalee close to the centre of the shadow-track, with a duration of total obscuration amounting to two and a half minutes. Strangely enough the increase of the estimated duration was alone noticed by the writer of an article in *Nature*, and it was reasoned that since the duration is so considerable at Trincomalee on the border of the track, it must be very much greater at places on the centre of the track. I need scarcely point out that this inference was unwarranted. In fact the duration of totality can never under any circumstances be considerable for places close to the border of the shadow-track.* In southern India the eclipse will last about as long as the eclipse of last year at the best stations.

It cannot be doubted that the observers this year will have a much more difficult task than those who have added so importantly to our knowledge during the eclipses of the last three years. This will appear on a brief consideration of the progress and present position of the problem with which the observers are to deal.

In 1868, the observers of the great Indian eclipse discovered that the solar prominences are vast masses of glowing vapour, hydrogen being the chief constituent of these marvellous objects. But the solar corona, that glory of light which appears around and beyond the coloured prominences, did not at that time receive its interpretation. In 1869, the American observers directed their chief attention to this beautiful phenomenon; and they were singularly successful in their observations. One result of a very remarkable character was obtained by several observers. The light of the corona when analysed in the spectroscope was found to be in large part monochromatic, the coronal spectrum showing one bright line. Now the reader is doubtless aware that in spectrum analysis the essential point is to determine *where* any bright or dark lines may lie along the range of that rainbow-tinted streak which we call the solar spectrum. In this instance the position of the bright line has been most satisfactorily determined by a very skilful spectroscopist, Professor Young, of America. The line agrees in position with one of the lines in the spectrum of iron, a line also seen in the spectrum of the aurora borealis. But the spectrum of iron contains upwards of 400 lines, while even the simpler spectrum of the aurora contains several lines; that of the corona, on the other hand, has not been *proved* to contain any other bright lines except the one just mentioned. Others have been suspected, but the degree of their brightness has not been such as to prove beyond all possibility of question that they belong to the solar corona.

However, as Professor Young remarks on this point (writing

* A somewhat similar mistake occurred last year, whereby the Sicilian eclipse party formed too sanguine expectations of the duration of totality in that island.

in 1871), "considered as a demonstration of self-luminosity one bright line is just as conclusive as many."

It was in fact demonstrated by this observation alone that the corona, for a considerable part at least of its extension, is a self-luminous object. "Nor can there be any doubt," we may add with Professor Young, "as to the location of the self-luminous matter. It cannot be in our atmosphere, for no possible reason can be assigned why the particular molecules of the air that happen to lie near the lines which join the eye of the observer with the edge of the moon should become luminous rather than others in a different portion of the sky. Nor can it be at the moon; otherwise, of course, it would always be visible round her disc." "Accordingly," he adds, "it is now universally, I think I may say, acknowledged that *one important element of the corona consists of a solar envelope of glowing gas reaching to a considerable elevation.* Mr. Lockyer, who is still disposed to assign to the solar element of the corona a lower relative importance than most other astronomers, concedes a thickness of from six to ten minutes"—that is from a fifth to a third of the solar diameter.

This, as I have said, was written by Professor Young in 1871, but before a certain most important fact had come to his knowledge, which without at all affecting what he here puts forward, renders it possible to say much more as to the real extension of the corona.

We have seen that a certain object, surrounding the sun on all sides to a distance of from 160,000 miles to 290,000 miles from his surface, is demonstrably a self-luminous envelope. It was to this envelope, or perhaps rather to its brighter portion as seen from the earth, that some proposed to assign the barbarous name "leucosphere," to distinguish it from the bright layer of prominence-matter close by the sun, which is called the sierra, or chromatosphere. But the visible extension of the corona is greater yet, and before the eclipse of 1870 doubts still existed as to the actual extent of that solar-corona, which all had now begun to recognize as a real entity. That some portion of the light seen around the sun during total eclipse is in reality only due to the illumination of our own atmosphere is altogether beyond question. It is true, indeed, as was pointed out by Professors Young and Harkness, Dr. Curtis, and myself, that none of the coronal light for several degrees from the sun's place, can be solar light reflected by our atmosphere, as had been mistakenly supposed; but it is no less certain that our atmosphere is illuminated not merely in directions lying close up to the moon's edge, but even towards the body of the moon herself, by the light of the coloured prominences and of the real solar corona. The observer himself sees these luminous objects during totality, and therefore the air all round him must be illuminated by them.*

* One cannot but be surprised at the stress which was laid by some soon after

Now here a question of extreme delicacy arises. The true solar corona undoubtedly grows fainter and fainter with increased extension from the sun. That is, if we could see the corona from some point raised above the earth's atmosphere, so that no terrestrial illumination could deceive us, we should see the corona gradually diminishing in lustre with distance from the sun, until at last it became too faint to be discerned at all. On the contrary, the illumination of our atmosphere during totality must necessarily increase with distance from the direction of the eclipsed sun. This is obvious, because those molecules of the air which lie directly towards the moon's place are themselves suffering total eclipse from the sun's direct light, and are illuminated by a rather less proportion of prominence and coronal light than the observer himself, whereas those molecules which lie in directions far removed from the place of the eclipsed sun are suffering either but a partial eclipse, or else, though their eclipse be total, they are yet illuminated by more lustrous portions of the corona and prominence-matter. So that so far as atmospheric glare alone is concerned, we should have, as I wrote in March, 1870, a relatively "dark region around the eclipsed sun and a gradual increase of light with distance from him."

The question which arises here, then, is this—at what distance from the eclipsed sun has the light of the solar corona so diminished, and that of the atmospheric glare so increased, that the latter light predominates over the former. This question is not only exceedingly nice, but, as actually stated, it is wholly unanswerable, unless as a matter of fact the real solar corona has definite limits, recognisable perhaps by more refined methods of observation than have yet been applied.

But although it is unlikely that the utmost actual extension of the corona can be determined by means of such appliances as are at present available, yet it was possible last December to demonstrate the extension of the corona to a distance far exceeding the six or ten minutes acknowledged by those who had once sought to reason away the corona almost wholly. It is clear that if any definite coronal feature extending more than ten minutes from the place of the eclipsed

the eclipse of last December, on the fact that even directly towards the moon's place, light was received which the spectroscope showed to be similar in character to that of the bright inner portion of the corona. Not only was the fact dwelt on repeatedly as a proof that the corona lies on *our* side of the moon, but it was commended to my own special attention as a proof that I had been mistaken in urging before the eclipse of 1870 that the corona is demonstrably a solar appendage. In the very paper in which I urged this view before the Royal Astronomical Society, on March 11, 1870, I pointed out that our air must be illuminated towards the moon's place by the light of all the visible solar appendages—as the prominences, chromatosphere, and corona—as well as by reflected earth-light. My words were sufficiently distinct. They ran as follows:—"The light from all these sources should extend over the moon's disc, since it would illuminate the air between the observer and the moon's body."

sun, could be seen at stations far apart, then beyond all question that feature would be shewn to be extra terrestrial. For instance, it could not possibly be imagined that some peculiarity in the air over Syracuse could reproduce a feature of this sort precisely as it appeared to the observers near Xerez, owing to a peculiarity of the air over this station.

Now, soon after the eclipse occurred, it was announced that the observers in Spain had recognised a peculiar gap, shaped like a letter V, in the lower portion of the corona—on the left hand. This gap was pictured and described to me by my friend, Mr. W. H. H. Hudson, M.A., and Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, before any of the other accounts had come under my notice; and it was with some interest that I awaited the January meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society, before which the records of the observers in Spain were to be presented. At that meeting a picture was exhibited by Lieutenant Brown, in which this V-shaped gap was a very prominent feature. But in the discussion which ensued after Lieutenant Brown's paper had been read, Mr. Hudson remarked that the gap had seemed somewhat larger to him,—on which Lieutenant Brown admitted that perhaps the size of the gap had not been quite adequately presented in his drawing.

After the meeting a photograph, taken during the eclipse by Mr. Willard, of America, was shown to a few of those present. Why the picture was not exhibited and described at the meeting itself I do not know. Probably the description was reserved for American societies. But whatever the cause, it is certain that if the picture had been shown earlier, some doubts which were expressed respecting the real nature of the corona would have been obviated. For there, in the photograph, and occupying the precise position described to me much earlier by Mr. Hudson, and publicly described and pictured by Lieutenant Brown and others, was this V-shaped gap.

Mr. Willard's photograph was taken at a station near Xerez, so that all that has hitherto been said relates to Spanish observations. To complete this portion of the evidence, I quote the following passage from an interesting account of the eclipse by one of the observers in Spain. It is extracted from the *English Mechanic* for January 27, 1871. "The corona proper, or glory, or radiated corona—as it is variously called—extended a distance of almost the moon's diameter from the moon's edge, but not equally in every direction. It had a greater extension in four directions, at the extremities of two diameters at right angles to each other, so as to give it the shape, roughly speaking, of a square with rounded corners. It was broken in parts, and notably by one decided V-shaped gap. This was observed, not only by one party, but at three stations, San Antonio, Xerez, and La Maria Louisa, which form a triangle, each of whose sides is five or six miles in length."

But in the meantime news had been received from Sicily which conveyed the unpleasing impression that the observations there had been all but complete failures. In particular it was supposed that Mr. Brothers, who had the management of the photographic department there, had been unable to obtain any useful results,—since no mention had yet been made of his success. I was indeed as much surprised as pleased, when I received a letter from him announcing that he had secured five photographs of the corona, in one of which the corona appeared “as it had never been seen on glass before.” It will be conceived that I awaited with great interest even the first rough sketch of the corona as there pictured. If the V-shaped gap appeared in such sketch, the conclusion would be inevitable that a real solar appendage exists having an extension at least equal to that indicated by the bounding edges of the gap—that is, an extension of at least 600,000 miles. If, on the other hand, that well-marked peculiarity failed to present itself, the inference would be that it does not exist in the photograph, and that, therefore, the seeming gap was due to some peculiarity of the atmospheric illumination at the Spanish stations. It would not, in this case, be by any means demonstrated that the sun has no appendage reaching so far as five or six hundred thousand miles from the sun’s surface, but it would be quite certain that the evidence given by the V-shaped gap could not be accepted as demonstrative or even trustworthy. The presence of the V-shaped gap in Mr. Brothers’s photograph would supply an argument positive and final; its absence would supply a negative argument, proving nothing however, and leaving the matter much where it stood before the eclipse took place.

The first sketch I received was contained in a hasty note from Mr. Brothers, written soon after his arrival in England. I was surprised, and, to say the truth, somewhat disappointed, to find that the V-shaped gap was *not* shown, as in the Spanish pictures. There were several gaps, but not one in the lower left-hand portion of the corona. But in the next letter which I received, Mr. Brothers intimated that the sketch was only intended to show the general aspect of the corona—to show its radiated structure,—and that, in fact, he had not copied the sketch from the photograph, the negative not being as yet unpacked. Some days elapsed before a drawing made from the photograph was sent to me. In this drawing the V-shaped gap was not only presented in the same place as in the Spanish views, but, as in them, it formed the most remarkable feature of the corona. Soon after, photographs taken directly from Mr. Brothers’s negative were in the hands of all who took interest in the subject, and there—pictured by the corona itself—was the gap on which so much was held to depend. All possibility of mistake as to the reality of the agreement between this gap and the gap shown in the American photograph was removed by the circumstance that two other gaps, less marked but still recognisable, appeared in both photographs.

I have dwelt somewhat at length on this V-shaped gap, because it is in reality of extreme importance. On no former occasion had any distinctive feature of the corona been unmistakably recognised at stations far apart. It happened strangely that on the first occasion upon which the corona was successfully photographed, a very remarkable and characteristic peculiarity was presented by the corona. Favourable as are the circumstances of the approaching eclipse, it is not by any means certain that the photographs taken at distant stations will be so well suited for comparison as those taken during the eclipse of last year. So that it is well to set store by the great fact which was established by the observers of the latter eclipse. The following words, taken from a letter addressed to Mr. Brothers by Sir John Herschel, serve to indicate the importance which he attached to the photographic records of the V-shaped gap:—"Assuredly," he wrote, "the decidedly marked notch or bay in both photographs" (those taken at Cadiz and Syracuse) "agreeing so perfectly in situation (marked so definitely by its occurrence just opposite the middle point between two unmistakable red prominences) is evidence not to be refused, of its extra-atmospheric origin.* . . . A terrestrial atmospheric origin is quite out of the question."

And here, in passing, I may venture to note as somewhat surprising—in the presence of such an opinion, announced publicly before the highest astronomical tribunal of this kingdom—the statement made by the President of the last meeting of the British Association, that the observations during the eclipse of 1870 proved the terrestrial atmospheric origin of at least the principal portion of the coronal light. Even if we rejected the positive evidence obtained during that eclipse, and even if we regarded Herschel's opinion as of no weight whatever, it would still be impossible to point to a single fact discovered last December which tended to confirm the atmospheric theory. Facts were noticed then, as facts have been noticed before, which at a first view seem to suggest a terrestrial origin of the coronal phenomena; but undoubtedly none of those facts were novel. Every circumstance that was new to astronomers was in favour of

* The omitted words relate to the absence of any signs which could show the corona to be a phenomenon produced within the space separating the earth from the moon. On this point, further, I may remark that I had occasion to submit to Sir John Herschel certain considerations relating to a theory that the radiations of the corona are produced by the passage of the solar rays past the moon's edge, through dispersed meteoric matter between the earth and the moon. I submitted, amongst other matters, this question to the great astronomer—Whether the light due to the illumination of this dispersed matter would not be altogether inferior in amount to the light received from the illumination of similar matter lying beyond the moon, up to and beyond the sun's place? His reply was, as I had fully expected, that undoubtedly this consideration (which he had not before noticed) rendered the lunar theory of the corona altogether untenable.

the extra-terrestrial origin, which, as we have seen, Sir John Herschel regarded as demonstrated. It is at least unfortunate that in thus summing up the results of the costly eclipse expedition of December, 1870, Sir W. Thomson did not mention what particular discovery then made seemed to his judgment to demonstrate the terrestrial origin (in the main) of the coronal phenomena. One can understand why Professor Tait, after hearing a lecture on the general subject of solar eclipses, should have remarked that what he had just heard convinced him that the corona was of terrestrial origin; for a variety of eclipse phenomena seem at a first view to suggest the atmospheric theory as the only available explanation. Moreover there can be no question that some of the most striking phenomena presented at the beginning and towards the close of totality, are actually due to the illumination of our atmosphere at those epochs by departing rays or returning rays of direct sunlight. After a lecture chiefly devoted to the consideration of precisely such phenomena as these, and illustrated by striking pictures of such phenomena, the opinion might well be formed that the chief part of the coronal radiance is simply atmospheric. It is only on a complete survey of the subject, and especially of the evidence relating to the corona as seen in the heart of the totality, that the immense weight of evidence in favour of the real existence of the corona as a solar appendage of amazing extent is clearly recognised. But so far as could be judged by the report, Sir W. Thomson's expression of opinion related solely to the new results—the discoveries, in fact—effected last December; and it is perplexing in the extreme to hear these results described as demonstrating the atmospheric origin of the chief portion of the corona.

The only new fact which seems in the least to countenance this remarkable statement, is the circumstance that the light received from the direction in which the moon's dark disc lay, was found, when analysed by the spectroscope, to resemble the light received from the corona. At first sight this seems to show that the corona itself is an atmospheric phenomenon. For certainly the light received from the direction of the moon's dark disc cannot come directly from a solar appendage. And as great stress was laid on this circumstance by some, unfamiliar with what was to be expected when this light came to be examined, it seems just possible that Sir W. Thomson may have been guided by their strongly-expressed opinion.

But as a matter of fact no other result could have been expected. I had myself pointed out in March, 1870, that reflected light of precisely the observed nature, must be received from the moon's direction. The air above and around the observer—including necessarily that lying towards the moon's disc—must needs be illuminated by the same coronal glory which the observer gazes upon with such wonder during totality; and the light of that atmosphere, so illuminated, must present the same characteristics as the direct light of

the corona, precisely as the light of the sky when examined with the spectroscope shows the same dark lines as the direct light of the sun.

We have only to remember, however, that the moon looks so dark during totality as to seem perfectly black, to see how very small a part atmospheric illumination can have in producing the coronal phenomena. The light received from the direction of the moon's disc must be at least as strong as any atmospheric illumination within the region occupied by the coronal glory; for this illumination, if we could see it alone, would be nearly uniform, while, where the moon is, we receive (over and above the atmospheric illumination) no inconsiderable amount of what astronomers call earth-light. The moon's surface, at the moment of a total eclipse, is illuminated by the earth some twelve times more brightly than the earth's surface in full moonlight. If we look at a distant hill (not forest-covered) bathed in the light of the full moon, we see that it is appreciably luminous—brighter certainly, in appearance, than the dark looking disc of the moon during an eclipse. Yet the moon's disc, during eclipse, is twelve times as luminous, at least; and if all other light could be removed, we should see the moon at that time as a disc illuminated with no inconsiderable degree of brightness. Since the moon actually looks almost black—though this reflected light is reinforced by the atmospheric illumination—we cannot but admit that the atmospheric illumination alone must be very inconsiderable compared with the light even of the outer parts of the corona, which, though faint, seem by no means black.

Professor Young, of America, has reasoned similarly on this point. "Some influence," he says, "our atmosphere must, of course, have; but remembering how much the inner portion of the coronal ring exceeds in brightness the outer, it would seem that the illumination of the lunar disc must give us an exaggerated measure of the true atmospheric effect. This illumination makes the edge of the moon only enough brighter than the centre to give it the appearance of a globe, but of almost inky blackness." Dr. Balfour Stewart, also, in a letter addressed to Mr. Brothers, points out very clearly how insignificant relatively must be the atmospheric illumination. "The light which reaches us in a total eclipse from the centre of the moon's disc, and which may be partly due to earth-light reflected from the moon, may be safely taken as somewhat exceeding that which can possibly be due to atmospheric glare; and inasmuch as in your photographs there is very little effect on the centre of the moon's disc, I am led to think that very little of the result obtained can be due to glare. I have here confined myself strictly to your photographs, but the principle laid down is applicable to all kinds of observations; and I must confess that I cannot at the present moment see why the streamers, if they are caused by the atmosphere, should invariably shoot outwards, and never venture to trespass upon the moon's disc."

The present position of astronomers is this—They have proved that there is a solar appendage extending to a vast distance from the sun's surface, radiated—usually, if not always—in structure, and shining in great part with its own inherent lustre. The portion of the corona's substance which is thus self-luminous, is gaseous. It may well be, however, that there is also a self-luminous portion in the solid or liquid condition—probably in a state of fine division. And it has been rendered all but certain that a considerable portion of the corona's light is simply sunlight reflected from solid or liquid matter in the corona. For while it is perhaps doubtful whether the solid or liquid matter is self-luminous through intensity of heat, no question remains as to the actual existence of such matter. Lastly, it seems highly probable that a portion of the coronal light has an electrical origin, like the light of our auroras.

Astronomers hope to obtain, during the approaching eclipse, more satisfactory information than they have at present, respecting the actual extension of the corona, as well as of the various portions of which it consists. The observers will have to discriminate between the light due to atmospheric illumination, and those fainter and more delicate portions of the real corona which have as yet not been traced to their actual limits (if they have any). It is hoped, in particular, that photographs taken at the extreme stations—those in India and Northern Australia—will so confirm the evidence first obtained from Mr. Brothers's photographs, as to convince the most sceptical that the corona is not a mere atmospheric phenomenon. It may well be that spectroscopists and polariscopists will obtain some new information respecting the structure of the corona; but to effect this they will have to overcome great difficulties, owing to the way in which the light from our air is blended with the light from the corona. Altogether, I am disposed to believe that at this stage of our progress chief reliance is to be placed on the powers of photography. After Mr. Brothers's success during the last eleven seconds only of totality (for a cloud veiled the eclipsed sun for the first two minutes), it may fairly be hoped that by applying his method the photographers may obtain such pictures of the corona as will throw an altogether new light on this wonderful solar appendage.

RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

THE LITERARY LIFE.

IV.

THE general reader frequently hears of the enormous number of "literary aspirants" there are in the world, all eager to press forward and snatch at the smallest chance of "a leg up." He has probably heard, in addition, that one of the causes that drove Thackeray from the editorial chair of the *Cornhill* (I do not vouch for the truth of this, though there is something in the story) was that he found his time too much taken up, and his equanimity too much shaken by eager "aspirants," who had all sorts of reasons but the right ones—namely, merit and adaptation—to urge upon him for the printing of the articles and stories that they sent; want of money being one of the principal of these utterly extraneous reasons. Now, it is certain that among articles of equal or nearly equal merit, the preference should be given to that of the writer who most needs help; but that want of money is *in itself* a circumstance utterly irrelevant to the other conditions of the case is, one would think, too obvious to need insisting upon. We must presume, I suppose, that the persons, chiefly ladies, who send articles and stories with an "appeal" because they want money, have full faith in the supreme merit of their writings; so that, with them, the irrelevancy is merely matter of hypothesis. Of course, a writer of merit may send in MS. with an appeal of the kind in question—Crabbe sent in his to Burke with such an addendum—but still, the circumstance is irrelevant; and I never knew a good article or story by an utterly unknown writer to be accompanied by anything of the kind. I have, however, admitted that there may be such a case. But I am sure that if there were, the appeal would be downright, simple, *bare*, and *probably almost defiant*; not a flabby, lachrymose whine—about "heavy losses" or "an aged parent"—written on scented paper, and enclosed in an envelope with a coat-of-arms to it.

I may observe, by the way, that there can be no better test of a person's capacity to write well than his power of wording properly an appeal of the kind in question. I have known two or three editors who would read with a flushed face a letter like Crabbe's to Burke.

But when I began I was about to say that those little papers have brought me more inquiries, from acquaintances, half-acquaintances, and strangers, than I can possibly answer at length in the usual way—inquiries concerning the best course for an "aspirant" to take. Too many of these inquiries show that the writers lack that first

essential for "success" of any kind—the disposition to take trouble. With this is naturally associated a marked readiness to give it, and a thoughtless inclination to put others in an invidious position. It is all very well for A to write to C, "Pray tell me if I write well, and I promise to abide by your decision." But C has probably read "Gil Blas," and remembers the archbishop; he has some reason to fear that a kindly candid judgment which had cost him much labour would be resented as an affront, and make him at least one enemy; and, in any case, why should A harass C by pushing him up into the judgment-seat in that way? C may reasonably, wisely, and kindly too, make answer, "My judgment might be mistaken—it is not fair of you to saddle me with this responsibility."

That is what I have often felt, and so my general answer to "aspirants" would be somewhat as follows,—and here I have no hesitation in assuming responsibility, for the advice is sound and wholesome:—You must make your own experiments, and pioneer your own path. Thackeray wrote, for years, at half-a-guinea a page, and had to wait wearily, as others have done, for the "public," and the position which made him able to command good terms for his work. That point gained, he is a busy and anxious man, no longer young—"homme célèbre veillit," you know—and though the recollection of his own troubles may make him kinder to you than some people were to him, you may depend he has his hands full. Hunt your own game then. Aim low to begin with. Try very very humble periodicals at first, and make your experiments as varied as you possibly can. Preserve whatever gets printed, and compare it with the workmanship of others. It is a great advantage to have your stuff before you in print. Pay careful attention to the special character and requirements of the periodical to which you send your matter. Do not let the ardour of any convictions of your own induce you to send to any untried quarter articles of opinion which would commit the periodical. *Attend particularly to the last two directions.* By degrees, aim higher; and, still, carefully compare your own printed odds and ends with the work of others. And it is then probable that you will some day make the "lucky hit," or meet the appreciative editor or publisher; in brief, that you will succeed in some sort of proportion to your merit.

But it must not be concealed that all manner of uncertainty must still overhang the most carefully and laboriously pioneered path in these matters. Not wishing to say all I know of odd accidents in the career of other people, I will, with the permission of the reader, give, in words both frank and plain, some account of the fortunes of a certain little labour of my own. I first wrote a small portion of it, which we will call X, and sent it to the intelligent editor of a periodical for which I already wrote. He rejected it quite sternly, because he said it "ridiculed" certain things. I was much surprised

at this, having written with conscious earnestness, and having intended no "ridicule" whatever. I then sent him another portion of the matter, which we will call Q. This he rejected rather cavalierly, because he found it "commonplace." Now, I knew it to be, whatever else it was, original and vivid, and my disgust at this reception was such that I laid the whole thing by for a time. Later on, being one month very ill and hard up for copy for another magazine, which was so badly edited that you could do pretty well what you liked with it, I called to mind those fragments, and sent one of them to press. It was printed, and instantly taken up by the newspapers, and quoted about and about. Later still, I sent the remainder to another periodical. Here, also, it was rejected, and I have yet its original by me, bearing in the margin such editorial comments as these—"Shocking!" "Horrible!" "???", "Truly awful!" Now comes the fun. First: the editor who rejected X and Q for the reasons above quoted, knew all about the topics treated, and I relied upon his knowledge to enable him to understand my papers. He failed. Secondly: the editor who found them "shocking" knew *nothing* about the topics, and I relied upon his ignorance, thinking he would surely pass what he knew nothing about. Thirdly: every line of these papers, including X and Q (the matter is objective, narrative, and perfectly simple), has been printed; has been welcomed by religious readers of all classes; and what has happened to it in the highest reviewing quarters, must not be told by my pen. Such is life, sometimes, in literature. These things are susceptible of explanation, if it were worth while to spend the necessary amount of time over them; but it is not. I could give other instances of the same kind; but it would only come to this, that most people are inapprehensive on some "side," and that even in some intelligent editors there is a deep vein of downright thickheadedness.

The relations of publishers and authors constitute too tender a topic to meddle with hastily. I reserve it.

There is one thing to which I feel as if I ought to refer, though it must be briefly, because it also is a delicate matter, though the delicacy is of a different order. We are many of us indebted in various ways to unknown friends—certainly, men who write are—and it is one of my chronic ambitions to say some words of thanks to such friends in a fitting and not wholly unworthy form—a form substantial, and not entirely unpoetic. But this is what demands to be *now* added. A man who writes feelingly and sincerely will, if his writing meets with any acceptance, be likely to receive private communications—some anonymous and some signed—which will be *very* cordial to him. The apprehensive reader will see why I say no more on that point.

A writer of essays and, I think also, novels, who has genuine humour, writes as follows upon a topic which has already arisen in these papers:—

"In the meantime, if we have not wealth, we have something. We can spend our lives where we will. If any literary gentleman's genius is so erratic as to cause him to prefer the country to London, he may go to Jericho—no, *not* to Jericho, because of the uncertainty of the book and manuscript post, but to Coventry, if he likes, and live *there*. And wherever he lives, he may do pretty much as he pleases. Society, so exacting with all other callings, is lenient to this one. She does not impose obligations upon him—to keep a page, or to rent a pew. He is treated by her with much the same sort of favour as Idiots are among the North American Indians. The Great Spirit has put a bee in his bonnet, and they not only forbear to criticise, but regard him with considerable approbation."

This is very ingeniously put, and there is some truth in it; but the tendency of the day is utterly to disallow of the bees in people's bonnets, whether they are "literary" or not; and certain portions of the work of journalism are necessarily done by a staff which is recruited more and more from the "Philistine" class. If there is anything much more offensive than the "virtue" of *bourgeois* journalism, I should like to have it pointed out to me. Give a "jawy" vestryman a good education and an extra allowance of brains of the sort you get in, say, a successful barrister. Then set him to write leading articles on social questions. It is true he will write as if he were in hourly telegraphic communication with the Great Spirit; but he will have very little mercy on the "bee" in anybody's "bonnet." His opinions and estimates of things are substantially those of the stout smug-faced man in the corner of the omnibus (who certainly never had a bee in his bonnet)—at least if they are not, they cotton to him in a most hypocritical manner. Such a publicist does not, strictly speaking, belong to the literary class at all. Whatever apparent exceptions may be urged to the contrary—Sir Walter Scott, for example, who was, however, no exception—the bee in the bonnet is more likely to be found in the artist class, of every sort, than in any other. It is impossible in the nature of things that the artistic temperament—literary, or other,—should not induce a dislike of *mechanism* of all kinds. In artists totally destitute of speculative power, and of some of the most important sensibilities the artist can possess (Sir Walter Scott was such an artist), whatever social mechanism comes to hand will easily be identified with their deepest emotions and convictions in matters of right and wrong. In artists of other moulds this will not be so, and the mechanism may chance to get the go-bye. I am not now going to discuss the question whether it is according to the will of "the Great Spirit" that the mechanism never *should* get the go-bye, but be always assumed to be an accurate sign of the thing meant to be signified; but, in the meantime, character is more than conduct; is before it, and above it; and practically determines all moral judgments. Not always the judgments that are uttered, nor usually those, but the verdicts that our hearts and consciences give, though the "Great Spirit" have put even a very trouble-

some "bee" in a man's bonnet. And I desire emphatically to repeat what I have already said on this point. I have been a familiar spectator and sharer of the lives of the class specifically called "religious." My very first glimpses of the life without convinced me, or rather showed me, in lightning-flashes of vision, that the exclusive assumptions of the lives with which I had been most intimate would not hold water. It remained for me, after many years, to find in the literary class (other artists would come under the same criticism, but I know less of them) people, who, bees in bonnets notwithstanding, were better and more lovable, taking them all round, than most of those I had known in other spheres of activity.

One or two practical counsels may be added to these hints. Although the best work is usually done when leisure and inclination assist, the rule has exceptions, and we must all cultivate the power of buckling-to at the desk in spite of *malaise* and unwillingness. Again: we should endeavour to write things when the impulse is fresh, and before they have become commonplaces in our own minds. Again: if troubled with superfetation of thought (which is often a sign of relaxed mental fibre), we should not vex ourselves with our own incapacity to overtake all our schemes or chisel out all our fine ideas. For some people to do all the things they have planned, and carefully planned too, would take them the whole day and night all the year round.

Let us hope there will be no misapprehension as to the right of "aspirants" to seek help and counsel, and the duty of those who can give them either to do so. The only question is, *when*. The first thing for the "aspirant" to do is to make quiet experiments, all by himself, for the purpose of determining to some extent his own power and place. To say nothing of stories in point which are public property, I could add numbers, illustrating the general rule that the "aspirant" who has stuff in him begins bashfully and tentatively on his own responsibility and does not *begin* by asking assistance. To make such a commencement raises a presumption that the person lacks that degree of confidence in himself which usually accompanies merit, and also lacks something of the only kind of humility which is worth having.

Lastly, I should rejoice with savage joy if I could quicken in others a just hatred of the literary man who can get himself convinced at a week's notice; the man who cottons, especially the one who cottons to Philistia; who flaunts his natural and very safe bunting of expediency in the eyes of the crowd who love it, but snatches also, when he thinks it will answer, at the rent, red flags of heroic daring. When Charles Lamb was asked if he knew Mr. So-and-so, and liked him, he answered, "No, I don't know him, but, at a venture, d— him." Now I *do* know the type here hinted at, for it is not uncommon; and, without any "venture" at all, I "say ditto to Mr." Lamb.

MATTHEW BROWNE.

THE CRITICAL CASE OF MAJOR ONEBY.

It was the year 1726; and George the First was on the throne of England, and Sir Robert Walpole at the helm of her destinies. London, and the country generally, was just recovering,—or hardly yet recovering from the bursting of the South Sea bubble. In July, 1720, the stock stood at £1,000 per cent. In August, Walpole, when applied to by the Earl of Pembroke for advice upon the subject, whispered in his ear: "I can only tell you what I've done myself; I have just sold out at £1,000 per cent., and I'm fully satisfied." By the 18th of that month the stock stood at £850; on the 29th of September it had fallen to £175! The crash of ruin had of course been tremendous, as the mania for sudden wealth and the spirit of gambling had been intense. And both the ruin and the spirit which had led to it contributed to bring down the tone of social morals, manners, and feeling to perhaps the lowest ebb to which they have ever fallen in this country. The mania for play infested the whole body of society to an unprecedented degree. High and low, court and city, male and female, all were infected by the contagion. When the *Tatler* was started in 1709, the public was told that "all accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment shall be under the article of 'White's Chocolate House;' Poetry under that of 'Will's Coffee-house;' learning under the title of 'The Grecian;' Foreign and Domestic News you will have from St. James's Coffee-house; and what else I shall on any other subject offer shall be dated from my own apartment." But it is the *Tatler* himself who tells us that "Will's" is very much changed from what it used to be—"Where you used to see songs, epigrams, and satires in the hands of every one you met, you have now only a pack of cards." About the same time we find complaints that the English love for music was dying, or had died out. We know how large a part music held in the social gatherings and enjoyments of England a hundred years before the time we are speaking of. Under the first of the Georges it seems to have expired. Not in one house in a hundred among the well-to-do classes; we are told by some social chronicler of the time, was such a thing as a harpsichord to be met with. The Italian opera was introduced, it is true, much about this time; but it was supported wholly by fashion, and very little love for music could be predicated of its frequenters solely on the evidence of their patronage of it. The old English school of music was dead; and it is a very noteworthy fact that a

very remarkable lowering in the general tone of society was contemporary with the extinction of it.

In 1720, the wife of James Edward Stuart had given a fresh impetus and encouragement to the hopes and schemes of the Jacobites by giving birth to a son; and the Bishop of Rochester, Atterbury, that most able, most active, most unscrupulous, and most dangerous of partisans, had declared that this was "the most acceptable news which can reach the ears of a good Englishman." In the summer of 1722 a plot was ripe for the invasion of England by the Pretender and the Duke of Ormond; but the conspirators were so imprudent as to apply to the Regent of France for the aid of five thousand men; and Philip, holding different views on such matters from those of Louis XIV., had immediately informed the British minister at Paris of the application. Walpole therefore was perfectly well informed, not only of the entire proposed plan of action of the conspirators, but also of the names of all the leaders among them. The King was advised to abstain from his usual annual journey to Hanover; a camp was formed in Hyde Park, and several persons, a couple of clergymen, a couple of Irish priests, a couple of lords, and a young barrister were apprehended. When, however, a few months later, in August, 1722, Atterbury was arrested and sent to the Tower, a very violent fever of excitement was produced throughout the Church and the whole of the High Church party. And this state of things also contributed powerfully to produce the low condition of morals which specially marked that period. For it not only caused an entire and utter divorce between religion and moral conduct, but placed the ministers of the former in a position of antagonism to the law. Prayers were offered up in the London churches for Atterbury when he was arrested for conspiracy against the established Government of the country! A good Churchman was then one who in heart, if not by his acts, was a criminal in the eyes of the Government; and it needs but little perspicacity to understand how such a state of things must have affected the tone of public morality.

It was a time when partizan spirit blinded men and ruled them so despotically that Dean Swift did not scruple to be guilty of the basest falsehoods in the *Drapier Letters*, written by him for the purpose of inflaming the unreasonable fury of the Irish against the Government, on the well-known occasion of the Wood's halfpence; and when men saw a Chancellor of England—Thomas Parker, Earl of Macclesfield—impeached and found guilty of prostituting his high office, by selling Masterships in Chancery, and conniving at the frauds of those officers in trafficking with the trust-money of suitors, and the estates of widows and orphans. It was in 1725 that Parker was condemned to perpetual exclusion from all office, and to a fine of thirty thousand pounds—a punishment which Lord Campbell considers, as he well might, a mild one.

It was the time when news came to England that Admiral Hosier, blockading Porto Bello, in reply to the menaces of Spain and Austria, had died there of yellow fever, together with a great number of England's seamen; and when old Lord Portmore, in his eightieth year, left England to defend Gibraltar, of which he was governor, against the Spaniard, and did so successfully for four months, till the enemy lost heart, and raised the siege.

It was a time when men wore the dress which is even yet familiar to our eyes, from its being still used on occasions of ceremony at court; and every man who called himself a gentleman carried a sword; when the hoops of the ladies were at their maximum of extravagant size, and when Tory dames and Whig dames distinguished themselves by the position of the patches on their painted faces.

It is difficult to believe that any man, who has made himself at all acquainted with the picture of the London world as it then existed, can doubt of the very great improvement which, much as there may be still to find fault with, has been achieved by our society since those days. We are told, however, not only that such *laudatores temporis acti* exist, but that they have been becoming more numerous of late. The perception of the ills they have around them, which the intense bull's-eye light of publicity under which we live makes more strong and striking than has ever been the case in any other age of the world, generates the notion that it would be well to fly to those which, in truth, they know not of.

For the consideration of those whose minds may incline in this direction, here is the story of an evening at "Will's" in those days, and of the results that followed from it.

On the 2nd of February, 1726, the tragedy of *Hecuba* was presented for the first time at Drury Lane. It was not successful. Its author, Richard West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, complains in his preface to the published work that his tragedy was damned because it was not heard. "A rout of Vandals," he says, "in the galleries intimidated the young actresses, disturbed the audience, and prevented all attention." The play, however, was unquestionably damned; for it was acted on two subsequent nights by Booth, Wilks, Mrs. Oldfield, &c., to all but empty benches. Before the end of the year the literary Chancellor died—whether or no broken-hearted at his dramatic failure does not appear.

Now, among the "rout of Vandals" who damned the Chancellor's play were a party of gentlemen, consisting of Mr. John Rich, Mr. Michael Blunt, Mr. Thomas Hawkins, Mr. William Gower, and Major John Oneby. Respecting the first four, though they all bear well-known names, the history of the following facts tell us nothing. They belonged probably to the class of "young men about town." Gower is, as it will be seen, addressed by Oneby as "young man;"

and the probability is that they were all much younger than the Major.

Of him the following particulars have been preserved. He was the son of a reputable attorney at Barwell in Leicestershire, who designed to bring his son up to his own profession. His mother was a near relative of Sir Matthew Wright, to whom the custody of the great seal had been committed early in the reign of Queen Anne, and it had been hoped that some place might be procured by his interest for young Oneby—"some genteel employment," as the records of that day have it. Nothing better, however, was to be got than a place of train-bearer, which the "aspiring and haughty temper" of the young candidate for genteel employment indignantly rejected. "His great spirit" still contented itself to wait a little while, in the hope that the gentility of pay without work might yet be offered to him. But as the months wore on, and this hope still failed him, and the notion of working through life as a country attorney was not to be entertained for a moment, he "took up a resolution of going abroad into the army." A commission was easily obtained in those days. They were days when our troops were swearing so terribly in Flanders. Thither the "aspiring and haughty" young man betook himself, and fought under Marlborough, "distinguishing himself in several battles and sieges, and receiving several wounds." One of his adventures in Flanders was a quarrel with a cavalry officer at Bruges, whereupon they "went out of the camp," and fought a duel, resulting in the cavalry man's death the next day. Oneby was tried by court-martial, and honourably acquitted, the duel being adjudged to have been fought fairly. Not long afterwards we find our Major at Port Royal, in Jamaica, fighting another duel with one Lieutenant Tooley, whom he also killed. But Tooley having been "perfectly reconciled to Mr. Oneby" before he died, the Major "was never called to account" in the matter. Having served in various parts of the world for two-and-twenty years, he found himself major in the regiment of dragoons commanded by the Hon. Brigadier Honeywood. But being reduced to half-pay on the peace of Utrecht, he returned to England, "versed in all kinds of vice, particularly gaming, to which he had much addicted himself in the camp, and had there met several revolutions of fortune, sometimes an auspicious hand of dice having enabled him to make an entertainment for the chief generals in the army." On his return to England he "associated himself with the principal gamblers of this town (London), designing to support himself after their example, and frequented all the public places of resort where gentlemen played, being seldom without cards or dice in his pockets."

So that we are now tolerably well able to understand what was the purpose of the Major's haughty and aspiring mind and great spirit

when he, then in his fifty-third year, led the party of young men, who had been uproariously damning the poor Chancellor's play, first to Will's Coffee-house, and thence to the Castle Tavern in Drury Lane.

There they sat down to drink ; for it would seem that, despite the frolic mood engendered by the work of damning *Hecuba*, the party were not yet ripe for the aspiring Major's purpose. And it was not till after the fourth bottle had been emptied, that the prisoner called for a box and dice. The "drawer" replied that they had none in the house.

"Why then," said the Major, "bring the pepper-box."

That cleverly-imagined substitute was brought, and dice were "found on the table," none of the young men knowing, as they afterwards declared, where they came from or how they got there. It would seem, however, that the four bottles hardly did their work sufficiently ; for none of the younger members of the party were much inclined to play. They said they would play low, none of them "setting above half-a-guinea." Apparently also one among them at all events had some notion that they were not in the safest possible company ; for Mr. Hawkins declared afterwards that he had "no great inclination to game, *especially to set*" the Major. After a trifling loss accordingly, Mr. Hawkins declined to play any further ; at which the Major appeared greatly disgusted, and asked him why he refused.

In reply to which Hawkins told him he "should use his own pleasure, whether it were agreeable to his—the Major's—humour or not."

The others continued playing, and Mr. Gower lost thirty shillings.

Mr. Rich then said, "Who will set me three half-crowns?"

Upon which Mr. Gower took something from his pocket, and put it down on the table, concealing it with his hand, saying as he did so, "I'll set ye three pieces." And then lifting his hand, he let them see three halfpence. This was looked upon as a jest by the other young men ; but the Major appeared very much affronted at it. "That is very impertinent," he said, "to set three halfpence."

"What do you mean by impertinent?" said Gower.

"You are an impertinent puppy!" returned the Major, and, taking up a bottle, he threw it at Gower's head. It narrowly missed his head, and knocked some of the powder out of his wig.

Gower in return "tossed" a glass or a candlestick—it seems to be not clear which—at the Major, but it fell short of him.

Both men thereupon ran to their swords, which they had hung up on the wall of the room. Gower, being nimblest, got his sword first, and drew it ; but did not advance on his adversary, contenting himself with standing in a posture of defence at a good distance from him. The Major advanced on Gower ; but Mr. Rich stepped in between them and prevented him. Whereupon Gower threw aside

his sword, and they all sat down again, and continued to drink for about half an hour. At the end of which time Gower, offering his hand to the Major, said, "Come, Major, let us be reconciled; words in heat may be forgot and forgiven."

The Major answered, "God damn you, you lie! I'll have your blood, by God!"

Then turning to Mr. Hawkins, he said, "This is all along of you!"

Hawkins answered, "Why then, if ye have done with him and have anything to say to me, I am your man, and will see you out!"

"No!" said the Major, "I have another chap first."

Upon this, Mr. Blunt, in the hope of bringing on a reconciliation and preventing future mischief, invited all the party to dine with him on the morrow. To which the Major answered, "No, God damn ye! I'll dine with none of ye."

"Are ye angry, sir? Have ye anything to say to me?" said Blunt.

"Or to me?" said Hawkins.

"Or to me?" said Rich.

But the Major replied that he had nothing to say to any of them.

It was then between two and three in the morning, and the party got up to leave the room, the Major "hanging his great rug-coat on his shoulders," as they did so. Mr. Hawkins went out first, Mr. Blunt next, then Mr. Gower, and Mr. Rich and the Major came last. But they were hardly outside the door of the room, when Major Oneby called to Gower, "Hark ye, young man, a word with ye!"

Gower turned back. The two men re-entered the room, and the door was immediately shut to violently, shutting out the others. Then a clashing of swords was heard, and a loud stamp on the floor, which Rich guessed must be made by Oneby, because he was a very heavy man.

Blunt and Rich tried to enter the room, but could not open the door. The drawer, however, coming to their assistance, they effected an entrance—Blunt first, and Rich close behind him. The Major was then next the door, and standing with his sword drawn in his right hand, the point of it being toward Gower, whom he held by the shoulder with his left hand. Gower then closed with the Major, "but in such a manner as if he rather fell towards him through weakness than otherwise." They put Gower into a chair, and sent for a surgeon, who found him mortally wounded in the lower part of the stomach, from which wound he died on the next day.

Rich told Oneby, as they left the room, that he feared that he had killed Gower.

"No!" said the Major; "I might have done it if I would; but I have only frightened him. But suppose I had killed him, I know what I do in these affairs. For I had killed him to-night in

the heat of passion, I should have had the law on my side ; but if I had done it at any other time, it would have looked like a set meeting, and not a rencounter."

All which nice technicalities duly considered, had no doubt determined the experienced Major to finish his man that night, instead of waiting till the next day.

Mr. Blunt, on coming up to part the two men, received a trifling wound in the stomach ; but he was unable to say how it was done. He thought it could not have been done by Gower, because, when he entered the room, he saw no sword in Gower's hand ; and Rich, on the contrary, found his sword afterwards at the other side of the room. Rich also declared that he had asked Gower on his death-bed if he received his wound fairly ? To which the dying man answered faintly, " I think I did—but—I don't know—what might have happened—if you had not—come in."

Here follows the Major's own account of the matter, as he gave it when placed on his trial :—

"A wager was laid between Mr. Rich and Mr. Blunt concerning Mr. Mills's acting the part of Cæsar in the play of *Julius Cæsar*, and it was lost by Mr. Blunt. After this a box and dice were called for, but not by me. The drawer said he had dice, but no box, upon which somebody called for the pepper-box. I flung a main at 12*d.*, and passed it about. Mr. Hawkins refusing, I said I thought there was as good fellowship in a little play as in altogether drinking. Then we played for half-a-crown or three shillings. And when the box came round again, the rest likewise refused to play. At last the deceased offered to set three halfpence, which I said was very impertinent. He called me rascal. ' You impertinent puppy,' says I, ' what do you mean by that ? ' Upon which he threw a glass at my head, and drew upon me. I told him he acted basely in drawing upon me, when it was he that gave the affront. After this I put on my great coat, and was going out. Mr. Hawkins had slipped away, and the rest being gone out of the room, the deceased pushed the door to, and drew upon me, and wounded me in the knee, and cut my fingers. I parried and closed with him. He endeavoured to stab me in the back ; at which time Mr. Blunt came in, and received a wound in his belly, which must have been by the deceased's sword."

The previous account given above of the occurrences of the evening is taken from the essentially concurrent testimony of Hawkins, Rich, and Blunt. And it will be seen that the Major's statement was unquestionably false in a great variety of particulars.

The jury before whom the case was tried brought in a lengthy special verdict, reciting the facts very nearly as they have been told above, and declaring that they found them to be proven, but praying the advice of the court whether this be murder or manslaughter.

And that was the question which made Major Oneby's case a critical

one, and which renders it still an interesting and ruling case to lawyers.

Had Major Oney been guilty of murder? or only of manslaughter, as he, "knowing what he did in such affairs," and according to his own knowing calculations, imagined? Of course, the reader, who has had the foregoing exact statement of the circumstances laid before him, feels no more doubt that the attack on Gower was to all intents and purposes as essentially a murderous attack as any murderer was ever guilty of, than he does in the case of any felon ever hung. No doubt, the motive to the crime was the passion of anger acting on a thoroughly depraved and ill-conditioned mind and ungoverned temper. But that is a totally different thing from the *furor brevis*—the uncontrollable phrenzy of passion, which the law recognises as a human infirmity sufficiently distinguishable in its character from malice *prepens* to place the deeds resulting from it in a different category from those of the murder. If, under grievous provocation, a man strikes out instantly, the law will not hold him to be guilty of murder, even though the result of his blow should be the death of the person struck. But if it is clear that the mind of the striker, however angry, has been traversed by the thought, however rapid, that to avenge the injury done him he would kill his adversary, or by any other act of deliberation upon any subject whatever, then murder has been committed. Thus, if A. pulls B.'s nose, and B. *having a knife in his hand* strikes with it and kills A., it is not murder. But if B., instead of having the knife in his hand, snatch it up from a neighbouring table and strike with it, a death so inflicted will be murder, because the taking of the weapon proves an act of deliberate intention, however rapidly conceived.

There is on record a very curious case, which was tried, I think, at Winchester, and much subsequently to the case of Major Oney, which illustrates the theory of the law on the subject in a very striking manner. A soldier under grievous provocation *drew* his bayonet, and killed the offender. And this was judged to be manslaughter, in accordance with the eloquently-urged pleading of an advocate for the prisoner, who maintained that for a soldier to draw his bayonet was as instinctive an act as for any other man to double his fist and hit out with it; that the act did not necessarily imply any thought of killing, but was the wholly unconscious recurrence to a means of defence as natural to a soldier as a bite from a dog, or a kick from the hoof of a horse. The decision was probably wrong. But the case no less illustrates the theory which governs the subject.

The question submitted to the court by the jury in Oney's case was tried before the Court of King's Bench in Hilary Term, 1726, Serjeant Darnall for the prosecution, and Serjeant Eyre, for the defence. The arguments on both sides were poor, weak, and con-

fused. It is notable, however, that it was consentingly held on both sides that the law would not regard mere words as any provocation at all!—a dictum which surely the practice of the present day would not recognise. As a sample of the nonsense talked by these learned gentlemen, it may be mentioned that Serjeant Darnall maintained that it was a worse provocation to call a man a puppy than to call him a rascal, *because "puppy" is the name of a beast!* The learned serjeant, as well as his adversary, seems to have forgotten, or not to have known, that the same may be said of the term "rascal."

Unless the talk of the two learned serjeants is to be held as having had the same effect as the speech of that "Mr. Parker, who made that darker, which was dark enough without," upon the memorable occasion which was wound up by Chancellor Eldon, saying, "I doubt,"—unless, under this hypothesis, it will seem strange at the present day that the Court of King's Bench could not come to any decision on the question before them, but ordered that the point should be argued before the whole body of the judges.

The trial thus ordered took place at Serjeants' Inn in Easter Term following, on the 6th of May. It is observable that neither of the gentlemen employed on the former occasion are engaged in the new trial. Before all the judges Mr. Lee was for the King, and Mr. Kettleby (Serjeant Baynes, who had been retained, being ill) for the prisoner.

The arguments of these gentlemen have not been preserved; but we have the summing up and judgment of the Chief Justice Raymond recorded at considerable length. After recapitulating the facts of the case, and the circumstances under which it had been brought before a court composed of all the judges of England, the Chief Justice declared that he spoke in the names of all his colleagues, their opinion having been entirely unanimous.

He begins by setting forth the legal theory of malice, the presence of which is necessary to constitute murder, points out that malice may be implied or expressed, that it may be general or particular, and then shows it to have been proved that Major Oneby had acted under the influence of expressed malice against his victim.

The remainder of the Chief Justice's judgment is not so lucid and well-ordered as it might be, or as a judgment pronounced from the bench would be at the present day. His lordship unnecessarily complicates and confuses the matter by going into considerations as to the amount and nature of the provocation given, and the other circumstances of the quarrel. Whereas the real point and gist of the matter lay in the fact that Oneby had acted with deliberation, and not in the heat of passion. The truth is that, up to a period much more recent than the date of this case, the maxims, dicta, and practice of our courts were under the confusing influence of the ideas generated by the practice of duelling. Thus Chief Justice Raymond lays it

down as acknowledged law, that if A. and B. fall out upon a sudden, and they presently agree to fight, and each fetches his weapon, and go into the field to fight, and one of them kills the other,—this is but manslaughter. Again, he says, if reproachful language passes between A. and B., and A. bids B. draw, and they both draw—it is not material which of them draws first—and they both fight, and mutual passes were made, death ensuing from thence will be only manslaughter, because it was of a sudden, *and each ran the same hazard of his life*. Now, the former of the cases here supposed would certainly be deemed murder at the present day. And in the second the suddenness, and not the community of risk, must be relied on to remove the result from the category of murder. And a little further on in his judgment his lordship very clearly says as much, and contradicts his previous position about the community of risk. If two men fall out in the morning, he says, and meet and fight in the afternoon, and one of them is slain, this is murder; for there was time to allay the heat, and their meeting is of malice.

It is also laid down very clearly that no mere circumstance of the man slain having been the first to strike, will prevent the slayer from being guilty of murder if other facts show him to have been moved by malice. As, if A. and B. fall out, and A. declares that he will not strike, but will give B. a pot of ale to touch him, and B. thereupon strikes A., and then A. kills him,—that will be murder. Two fall out of a sudden in the town, and they by agreement go into the field presently, and one kills the other,—murder. This last case, which the Chief Justice adduces, would seem to be in perfect contradiction to his law in that case, mentioned by him in the earlier part of his judgment, in which two men are supposed to “*fetch their swords,*” and then fight with the resulting death, called manslaughter only.

The case, however, upon which the counsel for the defence seem mainly to have relied, was a curious one, known as Rowley's Case, 12 Coke, 87. Two boys were fighting: one got a bloody nose, and ran to his father, three-quarters of a mile away, to complain. The father seized a cudgel, ran the three-quarters of a mile to the spot where the other boy was, and struck him on the head with it, so that he died; and this was held to be manslaughter, because the father's passion had not cooled, and the law cannot and does not fix any length of time as sufficient for the cooling of passion, seeing that, as Chief Justice Raymond remarked, the temperament of men and their intelligence are so different one from another.

This case of Rowley's may suffice to show how uncertain was the law in fixing the limit between murder and manslaughter. But it did not avail Major Oneby. It was held that he had clearly had time for his passion to cool. And to the hypothesis put forward by his counsel to the effect that, when the Major and Gower were shut into the room at last just before the fatal wound was given, there was

nothing to show that a fresh quarrel did not arise, in the heat of which the death-blow might have been given—it was replied by their lordships that where the slayer of a man seeks to reduce his deed from murder to manslaughter by alleging the suddenness of the provocation and quarrel, it is for him to show the suddenness. The *onus probandi* lies with him.

In reply to the demand what he had to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, the prisoner declared, as he hoped to find mercy at the hands of Almighty God, that he had never uttered the words, "Damn ye, I'll have your blood." And, further, he urged his long and faithful services in the army as a ground of recommendation to mercy. It was replied to him that a jury having found that he *did* use the words in question, his allegation to the contrary was of no avail; and, to the second, that that was a court of justice, and that mercy must be sought elsewhere. And it was ordered that the prisoner should be brought up again at the end of the week to receive judgment. But before the day arrived, an event happened which encouraged his hope that a pardon might be obtained for him. On the 11th of June, George I. died in his carriage as he was hastening with all speed towards Osnabruck, where his brother, the titular bishop, lived, as is related with such picturesqueness of detail by Carlyle in his "Life of Frederick." And Major Oneby's application for mercy must have been one of the first matters brought before George II. But the new monarch saw no reason why his accession should interfere with the course of justice, as unanimously directed by all the judges of England; and on the 19th of June, John Oneby was ordered for execution on Monday, the 3rd of July. But on the morning of that day he opened his veins with a penknife, and bled to death. On the morning appointed for the execution, we are told, he requested that he might be left to himself that he might compose himself against the coming of his friends. About seven he said faintly to his footman, who came into the room, "Who is that, Philip?" A gentleman coming to his bedside soon after, called, "Major! Major!" but hearing no answer, he drew open the curtains, and found him weltering in his blood, and just expiring. A surgeon was called; but before he came, the Major was dead.

From which contemporary account it will be observed that in many respects the proceedings connected with the last days of a condemned prisoner were very different at that day from the ordering of them at the present time.

Major Oneby was buried at a cross road, and a stake was driven through his body.

T. A. TROLLOPE.

HAWTHORNE'S FRENCH AND ITALIAN NOTE-BOOKS.

THE interest which men of letters especially, but also every lay admirer of Hawthorne, have taken in the reading of his Note-Books, will find a fresh stimulus in the present volumes,* which, it is understood, will close the series. They complete that revelation of the man and his method which the admiration excited by his works imperatively demanded. We see here the same faithful and unassuming observation of men and nature which marks the American Note-Books, but carried to greater perfection. Like the English Notes, these are less fragmentary and disconnected than the American, showing by their continuity of style the increasing inner demand of the author for rotundity and unity in everything the least that he wrote. The polished skill with which he brings before us the greater or smaller objects of note along the route seems to reach the summit of artistic power. There is an interval of nearly twenty-three years between the date of the first entry in the American journals and that which heads the present volumes; but no diminution of force or refinement is visible in the operations of the writer's mind. They bring us, in the annals of Hawthorne's thought, to within a few years of his death, and show that to the last he was enlarging and putting forth—a growing man.

The observation during the journey to Rome—his stay in Paris being brief—is rather more external than otherwise. He catches with miraculous ease the appearance and surface charm of things; but can pierce with equal power to their heart, embodying in language their most intangible glamour. There is no straining after novelty; he never loses his simple, dignified identity in the mask of caricatured sensation, as travel-writers are too wont. The charm of this book is very simple: it consists only in the fact that, professing to be Hawthorne, it is Hawthorne, and neither an infusion of other minds dipped out with his own pen upon the page, nor a spicy decoction from the clear fluid of his real, simple impressions.

The notes of his experience while dwelling in Rome and Florence deserve admiration for more than this trueness to himself—the clear insight which they display in various subjects, the calm and trenchant precision with which his speculations go to the root of fifty different matters. There is in general throughout the book a more diversified

* London: Strahan & Co.

mental activity and a greater play of fancy than in the English Note-Books. This fact is in consonance with the different character of the work inspired by Italian influence and that which was the product of English soil. "Our Old Home" is a collection of articles dealing chiefly with local English topics, and treated with solid reality in the author's most genial mood; while "The Marble Faun," better known in England as "Transformation," is a profound speculation in human nature, under the garb of a most picturesque and imaginative romance. There is, perhaps, no more delicate comment on the exquisite sensibility of Hawthorne than this, that he should be so open to climatic influence in his writing. The quality of his genius may be compared to that of a violin, which owes its fine properties to the seasoning of tempered atmospheres, and transmits a thrill of sunshine through the vibrations of its resonant wood: his utterances are modulated by the very changes of the air. It is a pleasure to mark the responses of this finely-poised mind to each and every impression. The alternate insight and self-criticism with which he views the famous art in Italian galleries show how loyal he was with himself to the truth. He never goes against his grain to admire the prescribed, nor will he assume that his own judgment is correct. The questionings with which he qualifies each opinion advanced show us the smelting process by which he extracted truth by grains from the uncertain ore of thought. He turns a statement over and over, handles it in all moods, before he can consent to take a solid grasp, and incorporate it as belief. The flow of his thought includes both poles, as where he says: "Classic statues escape you, with their slippery beauty, as if they were made of ice. Rough and ugly things can be clutched. This is nonsense, and yet it means something." One must admire the frankness with which he disapproves superannuated pictorial art. Blotted and scaling frescoes hurt his mind, he says, in the same manner that dry-rot in a wall will impart disease to the human frame. In Rome he recoils as if wounded from certain dingy picture-frames and unvarnished pictures. On this point we must quote, to be fair, from the editor's note in explanation. She says:—"Mr. Hawthorne's inexorable demand for perfection in all things leads him to complain of grimy pictures, and tarnished frames, and faded frescoes, distressing beyond measure to eyes that never failed to see everything before them with the keenest apprehension. The usual careless observation of people, both of the good and the imperfect, is much more comfortable in this imperfect world. But the insight which Mr. Hawthorne possessed was only equalled by his oversight, and he suffered in a way not to be readily conceived from any failure in beauty—physical, moral, or intellectual. It may give an idea of this exquisite nicety of feeling to mention that one day he took in his fingers a half-bloomed rose, without blemish, and smiling

with an infinite joy, remarked, 'This is perfect. On earth only a flower is perfect.' "

The present volumes do not afford so many of those quaint suggestions for tale or romance which made a chief charm of the American Note-Books. In accounting for this, something may be allowed to the advancing age of the writer, and something to the rapid change of scene during travel, and the multitude of fleeting impressions showered upon the mind in sight-seeing. But from other sources it may be proved that the number of ideas intended to subtend future fiction was at this period in fact multiplied. Their absence from the journals must be ascribed to the natural increase of a tendency on the part of the author to expend all the labour in his journals upon materialities, actualities—upon the description of multiform nature, human and physical, and art, rather than upon imperfect hints at the dreams yet to be embodied. There is, we may conjecture, a more decided consciousness that the idea of a poet must develop itself in poem or tale much as the soul develops itself in a human body, and that for this reason he will do well to concern himself chiefly with producing the work's grosser substance, sure that the essence will imbue it, as certainly as the soul a new body.

No one falls more completely under the head of ideal writers than Hawthorne. At the same time, no one has more devotedly subjected himself to the study of Nature in her every manifestation. What can surpass the delicate and wise humour of his study of pigs at Brook Farm, or the delicious reality of the ancient hens in the Pyncheon Garden? Hawthorne, in short, is a complete type of the artist, learning Nature accurately, rooting his whole mental system in the solid foundation of the broad earth and its everyday life, yet projecting in his works an ideal truth that branches into airiest space.

GEORGE P. LATHROP.

HANNAH.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

CHAPTER XV.

ALONE, in a foreign land—with only a child for company and a servant for protection, this, in the strange vicissitudes of Hannah's life, was her position now. Accidentally, rather than intentionally, for Lady Dunsmore had taken all care of her, and meant her to be met at Paris by Madame Arthenay, the lady to whom she sent her, and who, with herself, was the accomplice of Hannah's running away.

For she had literally "run away"—by not only the concurrence, but the compulsion of her faithful friend, who saw that the strain was growing too hard to bear. Living within reach of Bernard's visits, which were half a joy and half a dread, exposed to the continual gossip of Easterham—since though the Moat-House had entirely "cut" her, some of the other houses did not, but continued by letter a patronizing kindness most irritating—above all, suffering a painful inner warfare as to how far she was right in allowing Bernard to come and see her, since every time he came the cruel life of suspense he led seemed more and more to be making him—not merely wretched but something worse; all these trials, in course of time, did their work upon even the strong heart and healthy frame of Hannah Thelluson.

"You are breaking down," said the Countess, when one day towards the summer's end she came to take her young folks home. "This cannot last. You must do as I once suggested—go quite away."

"I cannot!" said Hannah, faintly smiling. "He would not let me." For she felt herself gradually succumbing to Bernard's impetuous will, and to the strength of a passion unto which impediments seemed to have given a force and persistency that had changed his whole character.

"Not let you go away? The tyrant! Men are all tyrants, you know. Very well. Then you must run away."

"He will follow me—as he once said he should—wherever I went."

"Indeed! Quite right of him. Still, as I object to tyranny, and as you will just now be much better without him than with him, I mean to help you to run away."

"But—the child!—he will miss her so. And I must have the child with me!"

"Of course. But do you think when a man is desperately in love he troubles himself much about a child? Hannah—my dear old goose! you will be a goose to the end of your days. Go and cackle over your little gosling, and leave me to manage everything for you."

Hannah obeyed, for she had come to that pass when her energies, and even her volition, seemed to have left her. She submitted tacitly to the Countess's plan, which was to send her quite out of England—to a far-away French town, Avranches, not easily reached, being beyond the limits of railways—where resided a dear old friend of Lady Dunsmore's, of whom she had often talked to Hannah—one Madame Arthenay.

"She will be the best protection you could have, for she herself married her sister's husband; as is constantly done in France, so no need of concealment, my dear. I shall just tell her everything. And you need not mind, even if Mr. Rivers does swoop down upon you some day—after his fashion. But he can't—Avranches is too far off. Nor will I let him, if I can help it. I shall tell him he must leave you in peace, to regain your strength and quiet your nerves. Good-bye now, and God bless you!"

The good Countess, as she made this hurried farewell on board the French steamboat, left them. Almost before Hannah knew where she was, or what she had consented to, she found herself alone with Rosie and Grace. Lady Dunsmore did not say what deeper reason she had for thus effecting a temporary separation, sudden and complete, between the lovers, even though it involved what she called the "kidnapping" of little Rosie. Knowing the world, and the men therein, a good deal better than her friend did, she foreboded for Hannah a blow heavier than any yet. That hapless elder brother, the present Sir Austin, was said to be in a dying state; and for Sir Bernard Rivers of the Moat-House, the last representative of so long a line, to contract an illegal marriage, in which his wife would be shut out of society, and his children held by law as illegitimate, was a sacrifice at which the most passionate lover might well hesitate. While, under these, or any circumstances, for him to doom himself for life to celibacy, was scarcely to be expected.

Lady Dunsmore had come to know Mr. Rivers pretty well by this time. She liked him extremely—as most women did—but her liking did not blind her to a conviction, founded on a certain Scotch proverb: "As the auld cock craws, the young cock learns"—that, when he was put to the crucial test, the world and his own family might be too strong for Sir Bernard. Therefore, on all accounts, she was glad at this time to get Hannah out of the way. But her plans, too hastily formed, somehow miscarried; for at Paris her two friends contrived to miss one another. When Miss Thelluson

reached Avranches it was to find Madame Arthenay away, and herself quite alone in that far-away place, with only Grace and the child.

At first this loneliness was almost pleasant. Ever since crossing the Channel she had felt lulled into a kind of stupor: the strange peace of those who have cut the cable between themselves and home, left all their burthens behind, and drifted away into what seems like "another and a better world." During her few days of travelling she had been conscious only of a sunshiny sky and smiling earth, of people moving about her with lively tongues and cheerful faces. Everything was entirely new, for she had never been abroad before, and whether the land was France or Paradise did not much matter. She had her child beside her, and that was enough.

She had Grace too. Many a servant is in trouble almost better than a friend; because a servant is silent—Grace was, even to a fault. Trouble had hardened her sorely. Even when, a few months before, the last blow had fallen, the last tie was broken between her and Jem Dixon—for their child had died—poor Grace had said only, "It is best. My boy might have grown up to blame his mother for his existence." Words, which when Hannah heard, made her shiver in her inmost soul.

That the girl knew perfectly well her mistress's position with respect to Mr. Rivers, was evident. When he came, the nurse abstained from intruding upon them, and kept other intruders away, in a manner which, though not obnoxiously shown, occasionally touched, sometimes vexed, but always humiliated Hannah. Still, in her sad circumstances, she was glad to have the protection of even this dumb watch-dog of a faithful servant.

Grace seemed greatly relieved when the sea rolled between them and England. "It would take a good bit of time and trouble for anybody to come after us here," said she, as they climbed the steep hill on the top of which sits the lovely tower of Avranches, and looked back on the long line of straight road, miles upon miles, visible through the green, woody country, which they had traversed in driving from Granville. "It feels quite at the world's end; and, unless folk knew where we were, they might as well seek after a needle in a hay-rick. A good job too!" muttered she, with a glance at the worn face of her dear mistress, who faintly smiled.

"Nobody does know our whereabouts exactly, Grace. We have certainly done what I often in my youth used to long to do—run away, and left no address."

"I'm glad of it, ma'am. Then you'll have a good long rest."

She had, but in an unexpected way. They found Madame Arthenay absent, and her little house shut up.

"We must take refuge in the hotel," said Hannah, with a weary look. "It seems a pleasant place to lie down and rest in."

It was; and for a few hours she lingered about with Rosie in

the inn garden—a green, shady, shut-in nook, with only a stray tourist or two sitting reading on its benches; full of long, low espaliers, heavy with Normandy pears. There were masses of brilliant autumn flowers, French and African marigolds, zinnias, and so on—treasures that the child kept innocently begging for, with a precocious enjoyment of the jingle of rhyme. “Give me pretty posie, to stick in Rosie ‘tittle bosie!” Hannah roused herself once or twice, to answer her little girl, and explain that the flowers were not hers to gather, and that Rosie must be content with a stray daisy or two, for she never exacted blind obedience where she could find a reason intelligible to the little wakening soul. But when, after a tear or two, Rosie submitted to fate, and entreated Tannie to “come with Rosie find daisies—lots of daisies!” Aunt Hannah also succumbed.

“Tannie can’t come; she must go to her bed, my darling. Poor Tannie is so tired.”

And for the first time in her life she went to bed before the child, laying her head down on the pillow with a feeling as if it would be a comfort never to lift it up any more.

After these ensued days—three or four—of which she never liked to speak much afterwards. She lay in a nervous fever, utterly helpless, and when, had it not been for the few words of French which Grace was able to recall—the Misses Melville having amused themselves once with teaching her—and the quickness, intelligence, and tender-heartedness of the inn servants—good, simple French women, with the true womanly nature which is the same all the world over—things would have gone hard with Hannah Theluson.

More than once, vague and wandering as her thoughts were, she bitterly repented having “run away;” thereby snatching Rosie from her natural protector, and carrying her off into these strange lands, whence, perhaps, she might never be able to bring her back, but herself lie down to rise up no more. But by-and-by even this vain remorse vanished, and she was conscious of thinking about nothing beyond the roses on the chintz bed-curtains, and the pattern of the paper-hangings—birds of paradise, with their sweeping tails; the angle which the opposite house made against the sky, the curious shape of its tiling, and the name of the *boutiquier* inscribed thereon, the first few letters of which were cut off by her window-ledge. So childish had her mind grown, so calmly receptive of all that happened, however extraordinary, that when one day a kind-looking, elderly lady came into her room, and began talking in broken English to Grace and the child, and to herself in the sweetest French she ever heard, Hannah accepted the fact at once, and took scarcely more than half a day to get quite accustomed to Madame Arthenay.

She was one of those women, of which France may boast so many, as unlike our English notion of a Frenchwoman as the carica-

tures of John Bull who strut about on the French stage are like a real Briton. Feminine, domestic, though after having brought up two families, her sister's and her own, she now lived solitary in her pretty little nest of a house; a strict, almost stern Protestant; pure alike in act, and thoughts, and words,—you would hardly have believed she was born in the same land or came of the same race as the women who figure in modern French novels, or who are met only too often in modern Parisian society. As Grace said of her after she had gone, “Ma’am, I don’t care how often she comes to see you, or how long she stays. She doesn’t bother me one bit. She’s just like an Englishwoman.”

—Which Madame Arthenay certainly was not, and would have smiled at the narrow-judging, left-handed compliment. But she was a noble type of the noblest bit of womanly nature, which is the same, or nearly the same, in all countries. No wonder Lady Dunsmore loved her, or that, as she prophesied, Hannah loved her too; in a shorter time than she could have thought it possible to love any stranger, and a foreigner likewise.

“Strangers and foreigners, so we each are to one another,” said the French lady early one morning, after she had sat up all night with Hannah—to give Grace a rest. “And yet we do not feel so; do we? I think it is because we both belong to the same kingdom—the kingdom of God.”

For underneath all her gaiety and lightness of heart, Madame Arthenay was a very religious woman—as, she told Hannah, “we Protestants” generally were; thoroughly domestic and home-loving likewise.

“It is a mistake to suppose that we French all fall in love with one another’s wives and husbands, or that we compel our children to make cruel *mariages de convenance*, as you English fancy we do. My sister’s was a love-marriage, like mine, and all my children’s were. You would find us not so very different from yourselves if you once came and settled among us. Suppose you were to try?”

So said she, looking kindly at her; but though, as both knew, she had been told everything, this was the first time Madame Arthenay had made any allusion to Miss Thelluson’s future or her own past. Besides, they did not talk very much, she speaking chiefly in French, which Hannah found it an effort to follow. But she loved to read the cosmopolitan language of the sweet eyes, to accept the good offices of the tender, skilful, useful hands. Years afterwards, when all its bitterness, and pain, and terror had died out, the only thing she remembered about that forlorn illness in a far-away French town, was the kindness of all the good French people about her, and especially of Madame Arthenay.

But when she was convalescent, Hannah’s heart woke up from the stupor into which it had fallen. She wanted to get well all in

a minute, that she might have back her little Rosie, who had been spirited away from her by those compassionate French mothers, and was turning into *une petite Française* as fast as possible. Above all, she craved for news from home : it was a fortnight now since she had had one word—one line. She did not wish—nay, she dreaded—to have a letter from Bernard ; but she would have liked to hear of him—how he took the news of her flight, whether he was angry with her, and whether he missed his child. But no tidings came, and she did not want to write till she was better. Besides, Madame Arthenay took all the writing things away.

"You are my slave, my captive. Madame la Comtesse exacts it," said she in her pretty French. "You are not to do a single thing, nor to stir out of your room until I give you leave, which will likely be to-morrow. And now I must bid you adieu, as I have a friend coming who will stay the whole day. Could you rest here quiet, do you think, and spare me an hour of Grace and Rosie ? I should like to show my friend the little English rose."

Hannah promised vaguely, and was left alone ; to study as heretofore the flowers on the chintz and the long-tailed birds on the wall. She was getting very weary of her imprisonment—she who had never before been confined to her room for a whole week. It was a lovely day ; she knew that by the bit of intensely blue sky behind the house-tiles opposite, and the soft, sweet air that, together with the cheerful street noises of a foreign town, entered in at the open window. A longing to "rise up and walk" came over her—to go out and see what could be seen ; above all, to catch a glimpse of that glorious view which she had noticed in coming up the hill—the sea-view, with Mont St. Michel in the distance ; that wonderful rock castle, dedicated to her favourite angel (in the days when she was a poetical young lady she always had a statue of him in her room), St. Michael, the angel of high places, the angel who fights against wrong.

It was a vagary, more like a school-girl than a grown woman ; but Hannah could not help it. She felt she must go out—must feel the fresh air and sunshine, and try if she could walk, if there was any remnant of health and strength left in her ; for she would need both so much.

She was already dressed, for she had insisted upon it. Searching for her bonnet and shawl, and smiling with a pathetic pleasure to find she really could walk pretty well—also wondering, with childish amusement, as to whether, if Grace met her, she would not take her for a ghost—Hannah stole down through the quiet hotel, and out into the street—that picturesque street of Avranches which leads towards the public gardens, and the spot where, within six square feet, is piled up the poor remnant of its once splendid cathedral.

Madame Arthenay had described it, and the various features of the town, during the gentle, flowing, unexciting conversation which she

pertinaciously kept up by the invalid's bed-side, so Hannah easily found her way thither; tottering a little at first, but soon drinking in the life-giving stimulus of that freshest, purest air, blowing on a hill-top from over the sea. All her life, Hannah had loved high places; they feel nearer heaven somehow, and lift one above the petty pains and grovelling pleasures of this mortal life. Even now, weak as she was, she was conscious of a sensation of pleasure, as if her life were not all done. She wandered about, losing her way, and finding it again; or amusing herself by asking it of those kindly, courteous French folk, who, whenever they looked in her face, stopped and softened their voices, as if they knew she had been ill and in trouble. One of them—a benign-looking old gentleman, taking the air with his old wife, just like an English Darby and Joan—civilly pointed out to her the *Jardin des Plantes* as being a charming place to walk in, where madame would find easy benches to repose herself upon, and a sea-view, with *Mont St. Michel* in it, that was truly “*magnifique*.” Madame's own beautiful island could furnish nothing finer. Hannah smiled, amused at the impossibility of passing for anything but an Englishwoman, in spite of her careful French, and went thither.

It was a beautiful spot. Sick souls and weary bodies might well repose themselves there, after the advice of the good little fat Frenchman—how fat Frenchmen do grow sometimes! The fine air was soft as cream and strong as wine, and the cloudless sunshine lay round about like a flood; over land and sea—the undulating sweep of forest country on the right hand, and on the left the bay, with its solitary rock—fortress, prison, monastery—about which Madame Arthenay, in her charming small-talk, so fitted for a sick-room, had told stories without end.

Involuntarily, Hannah sat and thought of them now, and not of her own troubles; these seemed to have slipped away, as they often do in a short, sharp illness, and she woke refreshed, as after a night's sleep, able to assume again the burthen of the day. Only she lay and meditated, as one does before rising, in a dreamy sort of way; in which her old dreams came back to her. Looking at that lonely rock, she called up the figure of her saint—the favourite *St. Michael* of her girlhood, with his head bent forward and his sweet mouth firmly set; his hands leaning on his sword, ready to fight, able even to avenge, but yet an angel always; and there came into her that saving strength of all beaten-down, broken-hearted creatures—the belief, alas! often so faint—that God does sometimes send His messengers to fight against wrong; not merely to succour, but absolutely to fight.

“No, I will not die—not quite yet,” she said to herself, as in this far-distant nook of God's earth, which seemed to have His smile perpetually upon it, she thought of her own England, made homeless to her through trouble, and bitter with persecution. “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! Here, perhaps, I might find rest. But still I

will not die. They shall not kill me. They may take my character away—they may make him forsake me, as I daresay he will; but I have strength in my soul, nevertheless. And I will fight against their cruelty—I will protest to the last that I had a right to love him, a right to marry him; that it would have been the best thing for him, for me, and the child. Oh, my Bernard! there is a deal of the angel in you; but if there were more of the St. Michael—if, instead of submitting to wrong, you could take up your sword and hew it down—But you cannot. I know, when the time comes, you will forsake me! But still—still—I shall have the child."

Thus sighed she; and then, determined to sigh no more, to complain no more, to any living creature, but to do her best to get health and strength of body and mind, Hannah rose up from the heap of stones where she had been sitting. With one fond look at that glorious picture which lay below her—earth, sea, and sky, equally beautiful, and blending together in the harmony which soothes one's soul into harmony too—she turned her steps homewards; that is, "*chez elle*," for to poor Hannah Thelluson there was not—would there ever be?—such a thing as home.

As she went she saw a figure coming towards her, walking rapidly, and looking round, as if searching for some one. Had it been possible—or, rather, had not the extreme improbability of such a thing made her stop a minute, and draw her hand across her eyes, to make sure that imagination was not playing her false—she should have said it was Bernard.

He saw her likewise; and the two ghosts—for strangely ghostly they both looked to one another's eyes—met.

"Hannah! how could you——"

"Bernard! oh, Bernard!"

She was so glad to see him—he could not help finding it out; nor did she try to hide it—she was too weak. She clung to his arm, her voice choking, her tears falling fast—tears of pure helplessness, and of joy also. He had not forsaken her.

"How could you run away in this manner? We have been searching for you—Madame Arthenay, Grace, and I—for hours."

"Not quite hours," said she, smiling at last. "It was fully one o'clock when I left my room. Was that what you meant by my running away?" For she was half afraid of him, gentle as he seemed, and wished to have the worst over at once.

Bernard shook his head.

"I cannot scold you now. I am only too happy to see you once again, my darling."

He had never called her so before; indeed, she was the sort of woman more to be honoured and loved in a quiet, silent way, than fondled over with caressing words. Still, the tenderness was very sweet to have—sweeter because she felt so miserably weak.

"How did you find me out?" she said, as they walked up the town. And it seemed as if now, for the first time, they were free to walk together, with no cruel eyes upon them, no backbiting tongues pursuing them.

"How did I find you? Why, I tracked you like a Red Indian. Of course I should—to the world's end! What else did you expect, I wonder?"

Hannah hardly knew what she had expected—what feared. In truth, she was content to bask in the present, with a passionate eagerness of enjoyment which those only know who have given up the future hopelessly and entirely.

In the course of the day she grew so rapidly better that, when Bernard proposed going for an hour or two to the house of Madame Arthenay, she assented. He seemed quite at home there—"flirted" with the sweet old French lady in the most charming manner. He had been with her since yesterday, she said; and was indeed the "friend" to whom she wished to show the little English Rose.

"Monsieur speaks French like a Frenchman, as he ought, having been at school at Caen, he tells me, for two years. He does credit to his Norman blood."

Which Madame Arthenay evidently thought far superior to anything Saxon, and that the great William had done us Britons the greatest possible honour in condescending to conquer us. But Hannah would not smile at the dear old lady, whom, she saw, Bernard liked extremely.

Soon they settled amicably and gaily to the most delicious of coffee, and the feeblest of tea, in Madame Arthenay's cottage—a series of rooms all on the ground-floor, and all opening into one another and into the garden—salon, salle-à-manger, two bed-chambers, and a kitchen; half of which was covered by a sort of loft, up which the one servant—a faithful old soul, who could do anything and put up with anything—mounted of nights to her bed. A *ménage* essentially French, with not a fragment of wealth or show about it; but all was so pretty, so tasteful, so suitable. It felt like living in a bird's nest, with green leaves outside and moss within—a nest one could live in like the birds, as innocently and merrily—a veritable bit of Arcadia. Mr. Rivers said so.

"Ah, you should come and live among us," said Madame Arthenay. "In this our Normandy, though we may be a century behind you in civilisation, I sometimes think we are a century nearer than you are to the long-past golden age. We lead simpler lives, we honour our fathers and mothers, and look after our children ourselves. Then, too, our servants are not so held wide apart from us as you hold yours. Old Jeanne, for instance, is quite a friend of mine."

"So is Grace," Hannah said.

"Ah, yes; poor Grace! she one day told me her story." And

then turning suddenly to Bernard. "I assure you, we are very good people here in Normandy. You might like us if you knew us. Monsieur Rivers, why not come among us, and resume the old name, and be Monsieur de la Rivière?"

Bernard started, looked earnestly at her, to see if any deeper meaning lurked under her pleasantry.

"Take care," he said; "many a true word is spoken in jest." And then he suddenly changed the conversation, and asked about an old Château de Saint Roque, which some one had told him was well worth seeing, and might be seen easily, as it was on sale.

"I know the present owner, a Lyons merchant, finds it dull. He bought it from the last *propriétaire*, to whom it had descended in a direct line, people say, ever since the Crusades; and—such a curious coincidence, Monsieur—the family were named de la Rivière. Who knows but you may be revisiting the cradle of your ancestors? If Miss Thelluson is able, you ought certainly to go and see it."

Bernard assented, and all was soon arranged. He was in one of his happiest moods, Hannah saw. He, like herself, felt the influence of the sunshiny atmosphere, within and without, in this pleasant nook of pleasant France—the distance from home-sorrows, the ease and freedom of intercourse with Madame Arthenay, who knew everything and blamed nothing. When, next day, they all met, and drove together across the smiling country, amusing themselves with the big, blue-bloused Norman peasant, who kept cracking his long whip and conversing with his horses in shrill patois, that resounded even above the jingle of their bells, Hannah thought she had seldom, in all the time they had known one another, seen him looking so gay.

Saint Roque was one of those châteaux of which there are many in Normandy, built about the time of the Crusades—half mansion, half fortress. It was situated in a little valley, almost English in its character, with sleepy cows basking in the meadows, and blackberries—such blackberries as little Rosie screamed at with delight, they were so large and fine—hanging on the hedges, and honeysuckle, sweet as English honeysuckle, perfuming every step of the road. Suddenly they came upon this miniature medieval castle, with its four towers reflected in the deep clear water of the moat, which they crossed by a draw-bridge—and then were all at once carried from old romance to modern comfort, but picturesque still.

Hannah thought she had never seen a sweeter place. "I only wish I were rich and could buy it. I think I could live content here all my days," said she to the Lyons merchant's wife, whom Madame Arthenay knew, and who, with her black-eyed boy clinging to her gown, politely showed them everything.

"Did you mean what you said?" whispered Bernard eagerly. And then he drew back, and without waiting for her answer, began talking to Madame Arthenay.

That night when he took them safe to the hotel door, he detained Hannah, and asked her if she would not come round the garden with him in the moonlight.

"The air is soft as a summer night;—it will do you no harm. We may have no better chance of talk, and I want to speak to you."

Yet for many minutes he said nothing. The night was so still, the garden so entirely deserted, that they seemed to have for once the world to themselves. In this far-away spot it felt as if they had left all the bitterness of their life behind them—as if they had a right to be lovers, and to treat one another as such. Bernard put his arm round her as they sat, and though there was a solemnity in his caresses, and a tender sadness in her reception of them, which marked them as people who had known sorrow, very different from boy and girl lovers, still love was very sweet—implying deep content, thankful rest.

"Hannah," he said at last, "I have never yet scolded you properly for your running away—with Lady Dunsmore aiding and abetting you. She would scarcely tell me where you were, until I hinted that, as a father, I had a right to get possession of my child. Why did you do such a thing? You must never do it again."

She laughed, but said nothing. In truth, they were both too happy for either anger or contrition.

"Dearest," he whispered, "we must be married. I shall never have any rest till you are wholly and lawfully mine."

"Oh, Bernard! if that could ever be."

"It shall be. I have been talking to Madame Arthenay about it, as Lady Dunsmore charged me to do. She loves you well, Hannah; and the dear old French lady loves you too already. Everybody loves you, and would like to see you happy."

"Happy!" And it seemed as if happiness would never come any nearer to her than now, when she sat as if in a dream, and watched the moon sailing over the sky, just as she had done in her girlhood and ever since, only now she was lonely no more, but deeply and faithfully loved;—loving, too, as she never thought it was in her to love any man. "Happy! I am so happy now that I almost wish I could die."

"Hush!" Bernard said, with a shiver. "Come down from the clouds, my love, and listen to me—to my plain, rough common sense, for two minutes."

Then he explained that the jest about his becoming Monsieur de la Rivière was not entirely a jest—that in talking with Madame Arthenay she had told him how upon giving notice to the French Government, and residing three years in France, he would become a naturalised French citizen, enjoying all the benefits of French laws, including that which, by obtaining a "dispensation"—seldom or never refused—legalises marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

And such a marriage, Madame Arthenay believed, being contracted by them in the character of French subjects, would be held legal anywhere, as her own had been.

A future, the bare chance of which made Hannah feel like a new creature. To be Bernard's happy, honoured wife, Rosie's rightful mother; to enter joyfully upon that life which to every home-loving woman is the utmost craving of her nature; she could hardly believe it true, or that, if possible, it had not been thought of before. Until a sadder thought occurred to her.

"What does 'naturalisation' mean? Becoming a Frenchman?"

"Yes. Also that I must 'change my domicile,' as lawyers call it, publicly and permanently; let it be clearly known that I never mean to live in England again."

"Never again? That would involve giving up much. How much?"

"Everything!" he answered bitterly. "Home, friends, profession, position; all the ambitions I ever had in my life, and I have had some. Still," added he—was it tenderly or only kindly?—as if he feared he had hurt her, "Still, Hannah, I should have you."

"Yes," said Hannah, and fell into deep thought.

How much is a woman to a man—say, the noblest woman to the best and truest man? How far can she replace to him everything, supply everything? A great deal, no doubt; and men in love say she can do all. But is it true? Does after-experience prove it true? And, it must be remembered, that in this case the woman's experience of the man was close, domestic; more like that which comes after marriage than before. She knew Mr. Rivers perfectly well, as a brother, before she ever thought of him as anything else. Loving him, she loved him open-eyed, seeing all his weak as well as his strong points as clearly as he saw hers.

Hannah was neither an over-conceited nor an over-humble person. She knew perfectly well her own deserts and requirements—Bernard's too. She was well aware that the ties of home, of kindred, of old associations, were with him passionately strong. Also, that he was, as he said, an ambitious man; that the world had a larger place in his heart than it had ever had in hers. She began to tremble.

"Tell me," said she, "tell me the exact truth. Do you think you could do this? Would it not be a sacrifice so painful, so difficult, as to be almost impossible?"

"You are right," he answered in a low voice and turning his head away; "I fear it would be impossible."

Hannah knew it, and yet she wished he had not said it. To her, with her ideal of love, nothing, except sin, would ever have been found impossible.

They sat silent awhile. Then Bernard, assuming a cheerful tone, continued—

"But, my dearest, there is a medium course. Why should we not, without being absolutely naturalised, take up our abode in France, where such marriages as ours are universally recognised? We might live here the greater part of the year, and only go to England occasionally. Even then we need not mingle in English society. The curate I have lately taken would be left in charge of my parish, so that I need scarcely ever go to Easterham."

"That means," Hannah said slowly, "that you could never take me to Easterham. Our marriage after all, would be like the other foreign marriages of which we have spoken, which at home are no marriage at all. Abroad, I might be held as your wife; in England I should be only——"

"No, no, no!" broke in Bernard impetuously, "do not wound me by the cruel word. It is not true. People could not be so harsh, so wicked. And if they were, why need we care, when our own consciences are satisfied? Oh, my love, my love, why cannot we be happy? Is it not right to be happy in this short, sad life of ours, which may end at any time? Besides," and his voice altered so that Hannah scarcely knew it, "you are not aware what harm you are doing me. This suspense drives me nearly wild. I can settle to nothing, accomplish nothing. My life is wasting away. I am growing a worse man every day; more unworthy of you, of my child, of"—here he stopped and looked upwards solemnly—"of her whom I never forget, my child's mother. Oh, Hannah, listen to me this once, this last time. Here, where it can so easily be done, marry me. For God's sake marry me—and at once!"

It was an awful struggle. Worse even than that which she had gone through when he was ill, and of which he never knew. The questions she had put to herself then, she repeated now—arguing them over and over with a resolute will, that tried to judge everything impartially, and not with relation to herself at all. Other arguments, too, came back upon her mind, arguments belonging to the great conflict of her youth, of which this one seemed to be such a cruel repetition—with a difference. For the marriage with her cousin would have risked only physical evils, but no moral suffering or social disgrace to any human being; while this marriage, which the law would never recognise as such, risked much more. All her father had then said to her,—her dear dead father, so tender and wise,—of the rights of the unborn generation, of the cruelty of entailing upon them the penalty of our joy, if that can be true joy which is so dearly bought—seemed to return word by word, and burn themselves into her brain. With Rosie even, it might one day be a difficulty—when the young grown-up girl came to discover that her father's wife was not really his wife, but only regarded as such out of courtesy or pity. And—what if Rosie should not always be the only child?

Sitting there, Hannah shuddered like a person in an ague; and then all feeling seemed to leave her, as if she were a dead woman, unconscious of the living arms that were trying to warm her into life.

"You are agitated, my own love!" Bernard whispered. "Take time; do not answer me quickly. Think it well over before you answer at all."

"I have thought it over," said she, looking mournfully in his face, and clinging to his hands, as those cling who know they are putting away from them every happiness of this world. "Not now only, but many a time before, I have asked myself the same question, and found the same answer. No, Bernard, for God's sake, as you say, which includes all other sakes, I will *not* marry you."

Perhaps they ought to have parted then and there,—Hannah thought afterwards it had been better if they had; kinder to him and to herself if she had fled away on the spot, nor remained to have to endure and to remember those bitter words which miserable people speak in haste, and which are so very hard to be forgotten afterwards—words which are heard afterwards like ghostly voices in the silence of separation, making one feel that a parting, if it must be, had better be like an execution—one blow, severing soul and body; then, nothingness.

That nothingness, that quiet death, that absence of all sensation, which she had felt more than once in her life, after great anguish, would have been bliss itself to the feeling which came over her, when having pleaded his utmost, and reproached her his worst, Bernard rose up, to part from her in the soft moonlight of that pleasant garden, as those part who never mean to meet again.

"My wife you must be—or nothing," he had said passionately, and she had answered with an icy conviction that it must be so—that it had best be so. "Yes, that is true; a wife, or nothing." And then the lurking "devil," which we all have in us, liable to be roused on occasion, was roused, and she said a few words which, the next minute, she would have given worlds to have left unsaid. For the same minute there came to him, put into his hands by Madame Arthenay's Jeanne, a letter, an English letter, with a broad black edge.

Bernard took it with a start—not of sorrow exactly, but of shocked surprise.

"I must go home at once. In truth, I ought never to have left home, but I thought of nothing, remembered nothing, except you, Hannah. And this is how you have requited me."

"Hush, and read your letter."

She dared not look over his shoulder and read it with him—dared not even inquire what the sorrow was which she had now no right to share.

Nor did he tell it; but, folding up the letter, stood in deep

thought for a minute or two, then turned to her coldly, as coldly as if she had been any stranger lady, to whom he gave the merest courtesy which ladyhood demanded from a gentleman,—no more.

"I must beg you to make my excuses to Madame Arthenay, and tell her that I am summoned home—I can hardly say unexpectedly, and yet it feels so. Death always feels sudden at last."

He put his hand over his eyes, as if he were trying to realise something, to collect himself after some great shock. Hannah said a broken word or two of regret, but he repelled them at once.

"No; this death needs no condolence. It is no sorrow—if death ever is a sorrow so bitter as life, which I begin to doubt. But it alters everything for me, and for Rosie. Poor Austin is gone—I am Sir Bernard Rivers."

Was there pride in his tone—that hard, bitter pride which so often creeps into a heart from which love has been ruthlessly driven? Hannah could not tell; but when they parted, as they did a few minutes after, coldly shaking hands like common acquaintances, she felt that it was really a parting, such an one as they had never had before; a separation of souls, which in all this world might never be united again.

CHAPTER XVI.

"This is the end—the end of all!"

So Hannah said to herself when Bernard had left, and she realised that they had truly parted—parted in anger and coldness, after many bitter words spoken on both sides. She repeated it, morning after morning, as days went wearily by; and no letter came—he who was always so punctual in writing. Evidently then he meant the parting to be final. He had thrust her entirely out of his new life, in which she could henceforward have no part or lot.

This, under the circumstances, was so inevitable, that at first she scarcely blamed him. She only blamed herself for not having long ago foreseen that out of their utterly false position no good end could come; no end but that, indeed, which had come. She had lost him in every relation—as lover—as brother—even as friend. It was sure to be—sooner or later; and yet when the blow did fall, it was a very heavy one; and many times a day she bent under the weight of it in complete abandonment of sorrow.

Not for long, however; women with children cannot afford to grieve for long. The very first morning, when she had to explain to Rosie that papa was gone away home, and would not come back again for a good while (she did it in Grace's presence, who opened wide eyes, but said nothing), there was something in the bright face

of her "sunshiny child" which soothed her pain. And when, in the strange way that children say the most opportune as well as inopportune things, Rosie sidled up to her, whispering, "Tannie not going away and leave Rosie. Tannie never leave Rosie"—she clasped her to her breast in a passion of tenderness, which was only checked by Rosie's distressed discovery of "Tannie tying."

Of course Tannie immediately dried her eyes, and cried no more—in the child's sight, at any rate.

Nor in anybody's sight, for she was one of those who find it not only best, but easiest, to "die and make no sign." Uncovering her wounds would only have made them bleed the more. Besides, what good would it have done? What help could come? Unless the law was altered, the only possibility of marriage for her and Bernard lay in that course which Madame Arthenay had suggested, and which he, with his strong English feeling, and the intensity of all his home affections and associations, had at once set aside as "impossible;" and knowing him as she did, Hannah agreed that it was impossible. But she would not have him judged or criticised by others who knew him less than she. If there was one little sore place in her heart, she would plaister it over—hide it until it was healed.

Therefore, when Madame Arthenay came as usual, she delivered, in carefully-planned phrases, the message Sir Bernard had left; and though the good old lady looked surprised, and evidently guessed—no woman with common womanly penetration could help guessing—that something painful had happened; still, as Hannah said nothing, she inquired nothing, but gave, with a tact and delicacy that won her new friend's love for her whole future life, the best sympathy that even old friends can give sometimes—the sympathy of silence.

They fell back into their old ways, and after a few days, this brief, bright visit of Sir Bernard's might never have been, so completely did it cease to be spoken of. Sometimes in the midst of her innocent play, little Rosie would make a passing reference to "papa," which Aunt Hannah answered with a heart that first leaped wildly, and then sank down, aching with a dull, continual pain. Evidently, not even for his child's sake, would Sir Bernard write to her or have anything to do with her. He had pushed out of his new and prosperous life not only her, but poor Rosie, whom he had left without asking for one good-bye kiss. Even the father in him was destroyed by his wretched position with regard to herself, and would be more and more so as time went on. Perhaps it was better, even for that, that the end had come—that there could be no doubt as to their future relations any more.

She thought so—she forced herself to think so—when at last the long-expected letter arrived. It was very brief; and he used to write whole sheets to her every week! And upon its courteously formal tone could be put but one interpretation.

"MY DEAR HANNAH,—

"I send the usual monthly cheque doubled, that you and my daughter may have every luxury that Avranches affords, and which, indeed, my new circumstances make desirable and necessary.

"If you do not dislike the place, I should like you to winter there; and, with the friendship and protection of good Madame Arthenay, to try and make it your home—as much home as you can.

"I will say no more at present, being fully occupied with family affairs, and with others which time will disclose, but of which I do not wish to speak till they are more matured. In the meantime I remain always

"Your sincere friend,

"BERNARD RIVERS."

That was all. No anger, no reproaches, no love. No, not a particle—of either lover's love or brother's love—of all that she had become so used to, gradually growing and growing, that how she should live on without it she did not know. Kind he was, kind and thoughtful still—it was his nature, he could not be otherwise—but all personal feeling seemed obliterated. It often happens so with men—at least Hannah had heard of such things—when thwarted passion suddenly cools down, like red-hot iron under a stream of water, and hardens into something totally unlike its old self; the impress of which it ever after retains. This is the only way of accounting for many things—especially for one thing which women cannot understand, that sudden marriage after a disappointed love, which is so common and so fatal.

Evidently he could not forgive her; could not restore her to even her old sisterly place with him. He had dropped her as completely out of his life as a weed out of his garden, now only an encumbrance and a reproach.

Well, so it must be. Hannah wondered how she ever could have expected anything else. She felt just a little sorry for herself—in a vague, abstract way—and fancied other people might be too, if they knew it all. Madamè Arthenay, unto whom—to save all explanations—she gave Sir Bernard's letter—alas, all the world might have read it!—Lady Dunsmore, whose correspondence was as regular and affectionate as ever, but who now never mentioned the name of Rivers; and, lastly, poor faithful Grace, who followed her mistress with yearning eyes, doing everything that humble devotion could do to give her pleasure or to save her pain, but never saying one single word. These two Pariahs of society—as Hannah sometimes in her heart bitterly called herself and her servant—clung to one another with a silent trust which was a comfort to both.

But their greatest comfort was the child. Rosie flourished like a flower. Every day in her young life brought some new and wonderful

development. That miraculous study of a growing human soul—lay patent before Hannah every day, soothing, calming, and interesting her, till sometimes she became almost reconciled to her pain. It was not the sharp agony of youth—she was accustomed to sorrow—but this sorrow had come too late to be cured. She knew it would not kill her; but she also knew that it would last her life. She had been a long time in loving Bernard; but now that she did love him it was with a depth and intensity which those only know to whom love is the last remnant of that *dolce primavera*—that sweet heart-spring time—after which nothing can be looked for but winter and old age.

She wondered how her years would pass—the years which would make little Rosie into a woman. And she wondered very much about the child, how she should be educated, and where. Sir Bernard only spoke of their wintering at Avranches—having no further plans for Rosie's future; nor had he ever had any that Hannah knew of. He had seemed to take it for granted that they three—she, himself, and the child—would always be together, and that there was no need to decide anything. In what manner he might wish his daughter—an important personage now, as Miss Rivers of the Moat-House—to be brought up, Hannah had not the slightest idea.

However, one day, when they were driving through this smiling Norman country, where the long lines of poplars had not yet dropped a single leaf, and the quaint old trees of the endless apple-orchards stood each with a glowing heap of dropped fruit round its feet, made Rosie clap her hands in delight, the little woman herself settled that question.

"Lots of apples! Rosie likes apples. Rosie stay here always, and get lots of apples."

A sentence which startled Hannah into deeper and more anxious thought than she had yet expended on her child's future. Truly her child's; she had now none of her own. She never for a moment deceived herself that to her happiness would ever come; that happiness which had fled from her all her life like a beautiful mirage. Only, by the mercy of God, she had been made—as she sometimes thought, with that bitter laugh that is akin to tears—a rugged old camel, who could bear endless burthens, endure weariness and hunger and thirst. The desert would be crossed some day, and she should lie down and rest.

But in the meantime would it be good for Rosie to remain in France, ignorant of her English ties; ignorant, above all, of her father, whom already, with the easy forgetfulness of her age, she seldom spoke about? What seemed at first a relief became to Hannah by-and-by a serious care.

Would she be quite right in binding Sir Bernard to the promise—which she knew he himself would never break—that Rosie should be

with her always? In the years to come might not this deprive both father and daughter of the greatest blessing of their lives?

Hannah remembered—in the utter blotting out of hope it was now doubly sweet to remember—how tenderly she had loved her own father; how after her mother's death she had been his constant companion and friend, with a tie so close that even his disapproval of the attachment between her and Arthur could not break it. This tie—the love between father and eldest daughter—Rosie would in all human probability never know.

Then, too, around Bernard, so young a man still, would soon spring up not only new interests, but new ties. She tried to fancy him Sir Bernard Rivers, master of the Moat-House—and what a noble master he would make!—beloved by all the country-side, bringing to it in due time a new Lady Rivers, fair and sweet as his first wife had been, and perhaps raising up in honour and happiness a numerous family—Rosie's brothers and sisters—to whom poor Rosie would be even less than she was to her father—a stranger, an interloper, unto whom the dear associations of kindred blood were only a name.

Forecasting all this, seeing it with a cruelly clear prevision, as the inevitable result of things, Hannah, even while she clasped her darling to her bosom, sometimes doubted whether hers were not a fatal love, which might one day overcloud, instead of brightening, the future of this her "sunshiny child."

"I may have to do it some time," she said to herself, not daring even in thought to particularise what "it" meant. "But I can't do it yet—not yet. My one blessing—the only bit of blessedness left me in this world!"

And night after night, when she lay listening to the soft breathing, thanking God that her treasure was still hers, close beside her, looking to her, and her alone, for the providing of every pleasure, the defence from every ill that the innocent young life could know, Hannah wetted her pillow with her tears.

"I cannot do it; even if I ought, I cannot," she moaned; and then let the struggle cease. She was not strong enough to struggle now. She rather let herself drift, without oar or sail, just where the waters carried her. Bitter waters they were, but she knew they were carrying her slowly and surely home.

In this dreamy state she remained during the whole of the brief, bright lull of the St. Martin's summer, which lasted longer than usual in Normandy this year, busying herself chiefly in planning pleasures for the two on whom life's burdens had either not yet fallen, or were near being laid down, the old lady and the child. With them, and Grace, she wandered everywhere near Avranches, and made herself familiar with every nook of this pleasant country, which Bernard in his letter had suggested she should try to substitute for "home." Well, what did

it matter? It was little consequence where she and Rosie lived, so that they were far away from him. This must have been what he meant, and she accepted it as such.

With her usual habit of what he had sometimes called "horrid resignation"—she had almost grown fond of the place, and even, in a sense, was happy in it, when one day there arose upon the strange, stupor-like peace of her daily life one of those sudden blasts of fate—like the equinoctial wind in which the St. Martin's summer ended—a storm, noted in this neighbourhood for years, by the destruction which it had spread. Hannah never heard it spoken of afterwards without recalling that particular day, and all that happened thereon.

The hurricane had lasted for twenty-four hours, and was still unabated, when, restless with staying in-doors, she went out. Alone, of course—which was unusual; but any danger there might be must not happen to the child. For herself, she used once rather to enjoy danger, to exult in a high wind, as being something to fight against; but now, when she passed out of the town, and saw the desolation that a few hours had made—tall poplars, snapped like straws, lying prone at the road-side, apple-orchards, in which there was scarcely a tree not mutilated, and many were torn up completely by the roots—she ceased to delight in the storm. She battled with it, however, as long as she could, though it was almost like beating against a stone wall, and then, unable to fight more, she sank, exhausted, in the first sheltered corner she could find.

"How weak I must be growing!" said poor Hannah to herself; and, catching sight of her favourite Mont St. Michel, the solitary rock, with its castled crown, looking seaward over its long stretch of sandy bay, the tears sprang to her eyes. Alas! there was no St. Michael to fight for her—no strong archangel to unsheath his glittering sword in defence of right or in destruction of wrong. She was a lonely woman, with not a creature to defend her—neither father, brother, husband, or lover. Also, she was powerless to defend herself; she knew—she felt—that her fighting days were all done. That ghostly gleam of love and hope which had brightened her life, had passed away even like this St. Martin's summer, in storm and tempest, and would never come back any more.

Tired—so tired that she could scarcely crawl—Hannah retraced her steps, hastening them a little, as she found it was near post-time, and then smiling sadly at herself for so doing. What could the post bring her? Nothing, of course. Her last letter to Sir Bernard, a mere imitation of his own, acknowledging his money—which she had no conscience-stings about taking, for she spent it all upon Rosie—and agreeing to his proposal of their wintering at Avranches, had remained now three weeks unanswered. Better so, perhaps. Total silence was far less painful than such a correspondence.

There was one English letter—for Grace—which, as it bore the Easterham post-mark, she took to her herself, and lingered half involuntarily while it was opened and read.

"No bad news, I trust?"—for Grace had uttered an exclamation, and seemed a good deal disturbed. "No harm happened to—to any one belonging to you?"

For though Grace now seldom mentioned Jem Dixon's name, they both knew that he was still at Easterham, slowly drinking himself to death—partly, he declared, because, since Grace left him, he had such a wretched home. Continually there was the chance of hearing that he had come to some ill end, and Hannah was uncertain how much Grace might feel it, or whether, in that case, she would not desire to go back at once to her sister's children, for whom she had had so strong an affection.

"No, ma'am," she said, looking at Miss Thelluson half inquisitively, half compassionately, "it's no harm, so to speak, come to anybody. It's only a wedding that they tell me of, a wedding I didn't expect, and I'm very sorry for it."

"Of some friend or relation of yours? and you don't quite like it, I see? Never mind, it may turn out better than you think; marriages sometimes do, I suppose."

A commonplace, absently-uttered sentiment; but Hannah was often very absent now. Life and its interests seemed fading daily from her, as from people who are going to die, and from whom, mercifully perhaps, all the outer world gradually recedes, growing indistinct and colourless as at twilight time; but also calm—very calm. She could not rouse herself even into her old quick sympathy with other people's troubles, though she saw that Grace was very much troubled about this letter, and continued so all day. Once upon a time the kind mistress would have questioned her about it, but now she took no notice, not till the two were together in the nursery, sharing the little bit of innocent fun with which Rosie always concluded their day. For Rosie was the drollest little woman at her bed-time, playing such antics in her bath, and carrying on the most amusing conversation while she ate her supper, that neither aunt nor nurse could forbear laughing. But to-night it was different, and the sharp little eyes soon detected that.

"Look, Tannie," she whispered mysteriously, "Dacie 'tying. Dacie hurt herself p'raps. Poor Dacie 'tying."

And in truth Grace, who stood behind her mistress and the child, had just wiped her eyes upon the towel she held.

"No; I haven't hurt myself, and it isn't myself I'm crying for. Never mind me, Miss Rosie."

"But we do mind, don't we?" and Miss Thelluson put her hand kindly on the nurse's shoulder as she knelt. "You shall tell me all about it presently. In the meantime, don't vex yourself more than

you can help. Nothing in life is worth grieving for very much—at least, I often think so." And Hannah sighed. "We have but to do our duty, and be as content as we can. Everything is passing away—soon passing away."

Grace's tears fell only the faster. "It isn't myself, ma'am—oh, please don't think that! I am not unhappy now. You are so kind to me, and then I have Miss Rosie; but what vexes me is this wedding I've heard about, and how people will take it, and——"

"Oh, I dare say it will all come right soon," said Hannah listlessly, rocking her little one in her arms, and feeling that love and lovers and weddings were things belonging to a phase of existence as far back as the world before the flood. "Who may the people be? Anybody I know?"

Grace stopped a minute before she answered, and then said, dropping her eyes, "Is it possible, ma'am, that you don't know?"

"How should I know?"

"I thought—I have been thinking all day, surely he must have told you."

"Who told me?"

"Master—Sir Bernard. It's his wedding that my sister tells me about. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

All the blood in Hannah's heart stood still. Had it not been for the unmistakable meaning of Grace's sorrow, and the necessity of self-command that it enforced, she might have fainted; but her strong will conquered. She did not "give way," as women call it, by any outward sign.

"Is Sir Bernard married? There must be some mistake. He would, as you say, certainly have told me."

"No; I didn't mean that he was exactly married; but that he is going to be. All the village says it. And to the last person I'd ever have thought he would marry—Miss Alice Melville."

"Hush!" said Hannah, glancing at the child, for Rosie, already growing a dangerous little person to speak before, was listening with all her eyes and ears. Happily, in the silence into which his name had fallen, she had not yet learned to identify "papa" with "Sir Bernard," so that as soon as she had got over her natural indignation at seeing aunt and nurse speaking of something which did not include her, who at this hour especially was always their sole object of attention, she curled sleepily down in Tannie's arms, a round little ball, with the pink toes sticking out from under the white nightgown—begging earnestly for "'Four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie,' 'just once, once more.'"

And Hannah sang it, without a mistake, which the small listener would have detected immediately; without a break in her voice either. For Grace also was listening—Grace who might go back to Easterham any day, and tell Easterham anything. Not that she thought Grace

would; but she might. And now, above all, whatever Easterham guessed, it must never be given the slightest certainty that Sir Bernard had ever been aught to her, except a brother-in-law.

Therefore Hannah laid Rosie peacefully in her crib, going through all the little ceremonies of tucking in and smoothing down, the "one, one more 'tittle song," and the "two tisses," which had been their mutual nightly delight for so long. Then she left her darling happy and at rest, and walked slowly down-stairs, Grace following. Thankfully would she have fled away, and hidden herself anywhere out of sight, but this could not be. So she looked steadily in her servant's face.

"Now, tell me all about this report concerning Sir Bernard."

It was a very natural and probable one, as reports go, and seemed to have been generally accepted at Easterham. The two were continually seen together at the Grange and the Moat-House, and it was said they only waited for their mutual mourning to end, in order to fix their wedding-day. More especially as, many years ago, when they were mere boy and girl, they were supposed to have been fond of one another.

"She was fond of him at any rate," Grace declared. "We servants all thought so when I lived at the Grange. She was a nice, pretty young lady, too. But she isn't young now, of course; not pretty either; only she is very, very good—capital about parish things and so on; and the kindest heart in the world to poor folks' children. She was so kind to mine," added Grace with a sob.

Hannah again laid her hands soothingly on her servant's shoulder, but with a strangely absent look.

"Not young—not pretty—only very good. She would make a good wife to him, no doubt."

"Yes," said Grace, hesitating. "Only—who'd ever have thought of master's wanting her? I didn't, I'm sure. Why, nice as she is, she isn't fit to hold a candle to——"

Hannah stopped her, terrified. "Hush, you forget yourself. Sir Bernard's servant has no right to discuss his future wife. You will displease me exceedingly if you say another word on the subject."

Had there been the slightest betrayal on Hannah's part, the poor nurse's heart would have overflowed. As it was, she was simply bewildered.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Thelluson. Us poor servants have no right, I suppose, to be sorry for our betters. But I was sorry, many a time, because I thought——"

"Think nothing at all, say nothing at all, either to me or to any one. My sister has been dead three years; her husband is at perfect liberty to marry again as soon as he chooses. And he could hardly marry a better person than Miss Melville. I am—very glad."

"Are you?" said Grace, looking at her very earnestly. And then

Hannah, driven to bay, and feeling the fierce necessity of the moment, looked back at Grace and, almost for the first time in her life, acted a lie.

"Certainly. Why should I not be glad of my brother-in-law's marriage?"

There was no answer, of course. Grace, completely puzzled, ventured no more; but putting the letter in her pocket, begged pardon once again, and, sighing, went away.

So far, then, Hannah was safe. She had borne the blow—nor allowed her servant to suspect what a death-blow it was; nay, she had even succeeded in concealing the fact that it had come upon her unawares. Poor innocent hypocrite! the lessons taught by the last bitter year and a half had not been lost upon her. But when Grace was gone she sat utterly paralysed.

Over and over again she had repeated to herself that all was at an end between her and Bernard; but she had never contemplated such an end as this. So sudden too—scarcely six weeks from the time she had parted from him—when he had been her ardent, despairing, desperate lover; furious because she would not sacrifice everything for him, as he said he was ready to do for her. And now he was quite ready to marry another woman. Could it be true? Was it probable—possible?

Something in Hannah's secret heart whispered that it was; that his impulsiveness of temperament, his extreme affectionateness and corresponding need of affection, made a hasty marriage like this, to one whom he knew well, and who had always been fond of him, not incomprehensible even to her. And yet—and yet—

"He might have waited—just a little while; have mourned for me just for a few weeks—a few months—as he did for my poor Rosa!"

And her tears dropped fast—fast; not the scalding tears of youth, but very bitter tears nevertheless. She had loved him so well, had endured so much for him, had had such a bright dream of what she was to him. Could it have been only a dream? Would any other woman be just as dear to him as she? And though she did not faint, or shriek, or moan, or do any of those desperate things which tragic heroines are supposed to indulge in upon hearing of the marriage of their lovers; though she went to bed and slept, and rose next morning just as if nothing had happened, still Hannah felt that something had happened—something which would make the world look never quite the same as it looked yesterday.

That yesterday was the last day she crossed the threshold for two whole weeks. The doctor said she ought not to have gone out in the high wind; that, out of health as she was before, it had caught her in some way, affected her breathing, smitten her at her heart. At which Miss Thelluson smiled. She knew she was "smitten to the heart."

But it was very convenient—this illness. It saved her from all need of physical exertion, even of talking. [She could just turn her face to the wall, and lie quiet, and do nothing. She felt for the first time in her life not the slightest inclination to do anything. Even when she rose from her bed the same incapacity continued, till sometimes Rosie's innocent prattle was almost too much for her, and she felt herself turning sick and faint; and saw, with a dread indescribable, Madame Arthenay or Grace carry the child away from her, and keep her out of her sight for hours at a time.

What if, by-and-by, this were to be constantly the case? What if this condition of hers was the forerunner of long and serious illness—perhaps the consumption which was said to be in the family, though in this generation her cousin Arthur had been its only victim? Suppose she were to fall sick and die? She began to have a feeling—was it sweet or sad?—that she *could* die, and that of mere sorrow. And, then, what would become of the child?

"Oh, my Rosie, if ever there should come a time when you were left forlorn with nobody to love you, when you might blame poor Tannie for having stolen you and kept you away from all those who might have loved you! If ever Tannie should die!"

"Tannie die? What's dat? Rosie don't like it!" said the little thing, to whom she had been talking. She had two ways of talking to her darling. One which Rosie could perfectly comprehend: long conversations about flowers, and beasts, and people, and things, and all sorts of subjects in which the child's intelligence was receptive to a degree that sometimes utterly amazed the grown woman. The other was a trick she had of speaking simply for her own relief, in a fashion that Rosie could not comprehend at all. But, baby as she was, she comprehended the anxious face, the tremulous voice; and repeated, with that pathetic droop of the lips that always foreboded tears, "Rosie don't like it."

Hannah changed her tone immediately. "Come here, my pet, Tannie won't die then. She couldn't afford it just yet. But listen a minute. Would Rosie like to go and see papa? Be papa's girl again, and play about in the pretty garden, and the greenhouse, and the nursery? Rosie remembers them all?"

"Yes," said the little decisive voice—Rosie never had the slightest doubt in her own baby mind about anything. "Rosie will go and see papa—soon, very soon. Tannie come too."

Hannah turned away, and could not answer at first. Then she said, "But perhaps Tannie might not come too. Rosie would be content with papa?"

"No,"—there was entire decision in this likewise—"Rosie not go to papa unless Tannie come too. Rosie don't want papa: Rosie will stop with Tannie."

And the little woman, squatting down on Tannie's pillow with an

air of having quite settled the whole affair, turned her whole undivided attention to a doll, whose eyes would open and shut, and who was much more interesting to her than any papa in the world.

But Rosie's unconscious words aroused in her aunt a dread that had once awakened and been silenced: the fear that as time went on this complete severance would produce its natural result; the child would become indifferent to the father, and the father to the child. For, let people talk as they will about the ties of blood, it is association which really produces the feeling which is termed "natural affection." Deprived of this, and then deprived of herself, Rosie might in a few years be left as lonely a creature, save for money, as her Aunt Hannah once had been—ay, and was now, save for this one darling, the sole treasure saved out of her wrecked life. But, was it lawfully and righteously hers?

There is a story, I believe a true one—most women will feel that it might have been true—of a Highland mother, who, travelling from one glen to another, was caught in a snow-storm, and lost for twenty-four hours. When found—that is, her body was found—she had stripped off everything but her shift to cover the child. It was alive still, just alive; but the mother, of course, was dead.

Hannah Thelluson, as she lay awake all through this night, the first night that they brought back Rosie's crib to its old place by her bedside—for she insisted she should sleep better if they did so—was not unlike that poor Highland woman.

Next morning she said, in a quiet, almost cheerful tone, "Grace, do you think you could pack up all our things in a day? For I want, if possible, to go back to England to-morrow."

"Go back to England!"

"Yes. What do you say to that, Rosie?" fixing her eyes on the child's face; and then, as a sudden gush blinded them, turning away, and contenting herself with feeling the soft cheeks and the rings of silky hair—as that Highland mother might have done when the death-mists were gathering over her eyes. "Will Rosie go back, and see papa? and be papa's own little girl again? Papa will be so fond of her."

"Yes," assented the little oracle, and immediately proved her recollection of her father, and her lively appreciation of his paternal duties, by breaking her doll's head against the bed-post, and then saying in a satisfied tone, "Never mind. All right. Rosie take dolly to papa. Papa will mend it!"

In a week from that time, travelling as fast as her strength allowed, yet haunted by a vague dread that it would not last her till she reached England, Hannah arrived in London.

Only in London, at an hotel; for she had no house to go to—no friend. Lady Dunsmore happened to be at a country seat; but, even if not, it would have been all the same. What she had to do no one

could help her in—no one could advise her upon; it must be solely between herself and Bernard. And the sooner it was done the better. She felt this; more and more every hour. The struggle was growing frightful.

"I was right," she said to herself, when, as soon as the need for exertion was over, she sank, utterly exhausted, and was obliged to leave to Grace the whole charge of everything, including the child, and lie, listening to the roll of endless wheels below the hotel window—as ceaseless as the roar of the sea, and as melancholy—"I was quite right! It is best to resign everything. I cannot trust myself any more."

The first minute that her hands ceased from shaking, she wrote the decisive letter.

"DEAR FRIEND," (she first put "Bernard," then "brother," finally "friend." He was that still; at least she had never given him cause to be the contrary) "I have, against your wish, returned to England, though only for a few days' stay, in consequence of having accidentally discovered the matter, to which I suppose your last letter referred; though, as you have never plainly told me, I will not refer to it here. But I think it ought to modify our future arrangements; which I should like to talk over with you. If you will come and see me here, me and Rosie, half an hour would, I think, suffice to decide all, and I could go back to France at once.

"I remain, with every wish for your happiness in your new life,

"Your affectionate friend,

"HANNAH THELLUSON."

After that she had nothing more to do but to wait, and watch day darken into night, and night brighten back into day—the dreary London day, all loneliness and noise—till Sir Bernard came.

He came, earlier than she could have believed it possible. He must at once have taken a night train from Easterham, which he owned he had; but, though he looked very tired, he was neither so agitated nor so confused as he might naturally have been under the circumstances.

"Why in the world did you take such a journey, Hannah?" was all he said, on entering; then, perceiving Grace and the child, he stepped back, and caught his little daughter in his arms.

"My pretty one! Run away, nurse, and leave her to me. I want to have her all to myself. What, Rosie! Has she forgotten papa? Two tisses!—lots of tisses! Papa's darling! Papa's lamb!"

Of one thing Hannah was certain, Sir Bernard was unfeignedly glad to see his child. No lack of fatherly love, even though he was going to be married. It gave that poor heart which he had forsaken, a thrill of joy to see how tenderly he caressed his little "lamb"—the

motherless lamb, that might have perished but for her, and which her care had now nurtured into a creature that, among any number of children, would be always the flower of the flock, so pretty had she grown, so winning, so clever, and, withal, such a good and loving child. Any father might be proud of Rosie. And as she clung about Sir Bernard, remembering all his old tricks with her, as if they had only parted last week, the two seemed perfectly happy together, and even like one another—with that strange family likeness which comes and goes in little faces, but which Hannah saw now as she had never seen before. Yes, Rosie was decidedly like him, and they would grow up to be a true father and daughter—one of the dearest and sweetest bonds that human nature can know.

She had quite forgotten herself—a trick she had, poor Hannah! in watching them and speculating upon them and their future—when she felt both her hands taken, one by her child's soft little fingers, the other by the strong clasp of a man.

"Hannah! can you forgive me? I have sometimes feared you never would?"

"What for?"

"For my unreasoning anger—my frantic love; above all, for having asked of you a sacrifice which no man should ask or accept from any woman. I knew this, felt it, the instant I came to my right senses, which was as soon as ever you were out of my sight; but it was too late to tell you so— Forgive me! You will have no need to forgive me anything again."

"I know that," said Hannah slowly, and waited for the next words he would say—words which would surely be confirmation of all she had heard. So sure was she of it, that she did not withdraw her hand; she even, seeing that his manner was not agitated, but even cheerful, began to think whether now it would not be possible to go back, in degree, to their old cordial relations; whether he could not be again her brother-in-law—and Alice Melville's husband. Still, something in her manner seemed to startle him.

"Know? What can you know? Not, surely, anything about these future plans of mine, which, for both our sakes, I have carried out, unknown to you, until now?"

"Nevertheless, I have found them out," said Hannah, with a faint smile. "In these things, you see, a bird of the air often carries the matter. I am aware of it all."

"Of it all? Who could have told you? And what?"

"That you are going to be married."

Sir Bernard started; then half smiled. But he offered not the slightest contradiction.

Hannah, perfectly convinced, conscious of only one wild impulse to get through what she had to say, that it might be all over and done, went on speaking.

"Married, as I hear, to Alice Melville, which is a choice that must satisfy everybody. That is the reason I came back to England. She is a good woman, who would be a good mother to my child. And I feel very weak and ill. I have been ill——"

"My poor Hannah! And you never told me?"

"Why should I? I only tell you now because it frightens me about Rosie's future. She ought to have safer protection than mine. She ought to have a brighter life than any I can give her. So I came to say"—Hannah drew her breath hard and fast—"if you want her back, I will give her up—to you and Alice. Only, first—I must speak to Alice—must make her promise——"

Just then tiny fingers ringed themselves round Hannah's cold hand, against which Rosie laid her cheek, in a caressing way she had. It was too much—the strong heart altogether gave way, and she sat down sobbing.

Sir Bernard had listened, quite confounded at first, then silently watched her.

"Oh Hannah, you good, good woman!" was all he said, and taking out of her arms little Rosie, now sobbing as piteously as she, disappeared from the room with the child.

Then it was really true, this marriage: he did not deny it. And he accepted her sacrifice of her darling. Well, once made, she could not retract it, even had she desired to do so. But she did not desire. She only wished to see Rosie safe, and then go away and die. This once, once more, for the last time in her life, she accepted the inevitable. It was God's will, and it must be.

Long before Sir Bernard came back she had dried her eyes, and waited, as she thought she ought to wait, for anything he had to say—any final arrangements they might require to make. There was a chair opposite, but he sat down beside her, and took her hand.

"Hannah, I want to speak half-a-dozen quiet words to you, which I should not have said till spring; but I had better say them now. It is quite true I am going to be married, and as soon as I possibly can. I am not fitted for a lonely life. Mine will be worthless to myself, my fellow-creatures, my God, unless I accept the blessing He offers me, and marry the woman I love. But that woman is—not Alice Melville."

"Not Alice Melville!"

"How could you ever think it was? She is very good, and we are fast friends—indeed, she has advised with me in all my plans, and we have been very much together of late, which may account for this report. How could you believe it?" and he smiled—his old, winning, half-mischievous smile. "As Rosie would say,—by-the-bye, how she has grown, that dear little girl of ours,—'papa don't like it.'"

Hannah had borne sorrow—but she could not bear joy; she was

too weak for it. Her lips tried to speak; and failing that, to smile; but it was in vain. She sank, quite insensible, in Bernard's arms.

It was a good many hours before she was able to hear those "half-a-dozen quiet words" which were to change the whole current of her life—of both their lives.

The plan which Madame Arthenay had first suggested, of naturalising himself in France, changing his domicile, and marrying as a French citizen, according to French law, had, immediately after his parting from Hannah, recurred again and again to Sir Bernard's mind as the only solution of their difficulty. On consulting the Dunsdales on the subject, they also had seen the matter in the same light. Though session after session Lord Dunsdale determined to bring forward his favourite Bill, still, years might elapse before it was passed and became law, and until then there was no hope of marriage in England for Hannah and Bernard.

"You mustn't ask it—or desire it," said Lady Dunsdale, ignorant—and she always remained ignorant—that he ever had asked it. "A woman like her would never consent. And she is right. To break your country's laws, however unjust they may be, and then expect its protection, is like disobeying one's father. We must do it—if compelled by his unjust exactions—but we ought to quit his house first."

So there was no alternative but for Sir Bernard to make the sacrifice—as hard for him as Hannah's renunciation of Rosie had been for her—and give up England for ever. His profession likewise—since no man with a conscience could break the canon law, and yet remain a clergyman.

"And I have a conscience, though they do not think so at the Moat-House," said he, faintly smiling. That smile and his worn looks alone betrayed to Hannah the sufferings he must have gone through in making up his plans—now all decided—and set in train. In fact he had already renounced everything, and prepared himself to begin a new career in a foreign land.

"I can do it, in one sense," he continued, "easier than most men—because of my large private fortune. I mean to buy the Château St. Roque, which you liked so much. Did you not say you could cheerfully spend your whole life there? Perhaps you may."

Hannah smiled; and there came across her memory a trembling flash of that pleasant place—with the four towers looking at themselves in the water, and the green upland-gardens and meadows on either hand.

"Yes," she whispered, "we could be very happy there. It would not be so very dreadful to live in France, would it?"

"At least, we must not say so to our good friend, Madame Arthenay, or to our new compatriots. And I hope I am not so very insular as to see charms in no country except my own. Besides, am I not re-planting my family tree where its old roots came from?"

Who knows? Years hence I may revive the glory of my Norman ancestors by making a speech, in my very best French, before the Chamber of Deputies. What say you, Hannah? Shall we shake British dust entirely off our feet, and start afresh as Monsieur and Madame de la Rivière? Great fun that!"

The boyish phrase—and the almost boyish laugh that accompanied it—comforted Hannah more than he knew. Heavy as his heart was now, and sore with his hard renunciations, there was in him that elastic nature which, grief once overpast, refuses to dwell upon it—but lives in the present and enjoys the future. And he was still young enough to have a future—to open up new paths for himself, and carry them out nobly; to live in content and die in honour, even though it was far away from the dear England where he was born.

"But it costs you so much—ah, so much!" said Hannah mournfully.

"Yes, but I have counted the cost; and—if you will not scold me for saying so—I think you worth it all. Many men become voluntary exiles for the sake of wealth, convenience, or whim: why should not I for love? Love—which is duty also, when one is loved back again."

Hannah smiled, knowing he was one of those whom it makes, not conceited or tyrannical, but strong and happy, to be loved back again.

"Besides," he continued, "I have not much love to leave behind: my sisters are all married—Bertha will be next spring. No one will miss me; nor perhaps shall I soon come to miss anything—except a few graves in Easterham Churchyard."

He stopped, and that last bitterness of exile—the clinging to the very sod of one's own land, the sod which covers our dead—came over him, sad and sore. Those graves—buried in them lay all his childhood, his youth, his brief happy married life with the wife, whom—though he seldom spoke of her now—Hannah knew he had no more forgotten than she had forgotten her lost Arthur. Time had healed all wounds; life, and its duties, had strengthened them both—strengthened them into that calm happiness which sometimes, after much sorrow, God sees fit to send, and which it is good to accept and be thankful for. But—as for forgetting!—She said nothing, only drew Bernard's head softly to her shoulder, and let him weep there the tears of which no man need be ashamed.

By-and-by she asked about Bertha's marriage, which was to a gentleman in the neighbourhood whom she had refused several times, but accepted at last. He was very rich, if not very clever or very wise.

"Still, she might have done worse. He is a good fellow, and we all like the match, except, perhaps, Melville, who speaks sharply about it sometimes; but Bertha only laughs at him, and says she shall please herself in spite of brothers-in-law."

Hannah looked keenly* at Bernard while he spoke ; but he did so in utter unsuspectingness. Evidently he had never guessed, in the smallest degree, the secret grief of his sister Adeline, the canker of her married life, that jealousy of her sister, from which all the restrictions of the law could not save her, no more than the terror of the Divorce Court can save poor miserable souls to whom vice is pleasanter than virtue. But to this right-minded, honest man, entrenched within the sacredness of a happy marriage, the one idea would have been almost as untenable as the other. Hannah was certain that, dearly as Bernard loved her now, had Rosa lived she might have come about their house continually, and he would have had no sort of feeling for her beyond the affectionate interest that a man may justly take in his wife's sister, or cousin, or friend—the honourable chivalric tenderness for all women, which only proves how deeply the one woman he has chosen is enshrined in his heart.

So what he had never once suspected she never told him—and no one else was ever likely to do so. Adeline's sufferings were buried with her. So best.

"And now," said Sir Bernard, "I must say good-bye. And I shall not see you again till we meet on board the Havre steamer to-morrow."

For he had arranged already that she should go back at once—avoiding the very appearance of evil—and remain with Madame Arthenay until he came to marry her, which, if possible, should be in spring.

"I shall come, like Napoleon, with the violets, and by then we must have these thin cheeks rounded, and these grave eyes looking as bright and merry as Rosie's. I used to say, you know, there was no telling which was most of a baby, Tannie or Rosie. By-the-bye, she must cease to say 'Tannie' and learn to say 'mamma.'"

Hannah burst into tears.

"Yes, there is one thing I am not afraid of," said she, when her full heart had a little relieved itself of its felicity. "I know I shall be a good mother to your child. What I am afraid of is whether I shall be a sufficiently good wife to you. You might have married almost any woman you liked—young, rich, pretty; whilst I—look here, Bernard."

She lifted up her hair, and showed him the long stripes of grey already coming — faster than ever since the trouble of the last two years ; but he only kissed the place, repeating Cowper's lines, which he reminded her they had often read together in those long quiet evenings which would all come back again, when the one deep and lasting bliss of married life, companionship, would be theirs without alloy—companionship, which even in friendship alone, without marriage, had been so sweet:—

"Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still as lovely to my sight
As golden beams of orient light—
My Mary."

"No, Hannah," he said, "I am not afraid—neither of our new life nor of ourselves. I know what a man marries a woman for—not for this beauty or that, this quality or that peculiarity; but because she suits him, sympathises with him, is able to make of him a better man than he ever was before—as you have made me. If I had let you go, I should have been not only a coward, but a fool. I take you just as you are, 'with all your imperfections on your head,' as I hope you will take me."

"Yes," she said laughing, though the tears were in her eyes.

"Very well, then. Let us be content."

He put his arms about her, and stood looking deep down into her eyes. He was much handsomer than she, brighter and younger-looking; yet there was something in Hannah's face which, with all its handsomeness, his had not—a certain spiritual charm which, when a man once recognises in a woman is an attraction as mysterious as it is irresistible—makes him crave for her, as the one necessity of his existence, risk everything in order to win her, and having won her, love her to the last with a passion that survives all change, all decay. What this charm was, probably Bernard himself could not have told; but Lady Dunsmore, speaking of Hannah, once characterised it as being "a combination of the angel and the child."

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE is a picture familiar to many, for it was in the Great Exhibition of 1851, and few stopped to look at it without tears—"The Last Look of Home," by Ford Madox Browne. Merely a bit of a ship's side—one of those emigrant ships such as are constantly seen at Liverpool, or other ports whence they sail—with its long rows of dangling cabbages, and its utter confusion of cargo and passengers. There, indifferent to all, and intently gazing on the receding shore, sit two persons—undoubtedly a man and his wife—emigrants—and bidding adieu to home for ever. The man is quite broken-down; but the woman, sad as she looks, has hope and courage in her face. Why not? In one hand she firmly clasps her husband's—the other supports her sleeping babe. *She* is not disconsolate, for she carries her "home" with her.

In the picture the man is—not at all like Bernard, certainly; but the woman is exceedingly like Hannah—in expression at least—as she sat on the deck of the French steamer, taking her last look of

dear old England, with its white cliffs glimmering in the moonlight—fainter and fainter every minute—across the long reach of Southampton Water.

Bernard sat beside her—but he too was very silent. He meant to go back again as soon as he had seen her and Rosie and Grace safely landed at Havre; but he knew that to Hannah this farewell of her native land was, in all human probability, a farewell “for good.”

Ay, for good—in the fullest sense; and she believed it; believed that they were both doing right, and that God’s blessing would follow them wherever they went; yet she could not choose but be a little sad; until she felt the touch of the small, soft hand which now, as ever, was continuously creeping into Tannie’s. Then she was content. If it had been God’s will to give her no future of her own at all, she could have rested happily in that of the child and the child’s father.

It happened to be a most beautiful night for crossing—the sea calm as glass, and the air mild as summer, though it was in the beginning of November. Hannah could not bear to go below, but with Rosie and Grace occupied one of those pleasant cabins upon deck—sheltered on three sides, open on the fourth. There, wrapped in countless rugs and shawls, Rosie being in an ecstasy at the idea of going to bed in her clothes, “all under the tars” (“s” was still an impossible first consonant to the baby tongue), she settled down for the night, with her child in her arms, and her faithful servant at her feet.

Sir Bernard made them all as comfortable and warm as he could—kissed his child, and Hannah too, in Grace’s presence. For he had himself informed the nurse how matters stood, and told her that in his house she should have a home for life, in a country where marriages such as hers were considered honourable, natural, and right. Then he bade them all good night, and went to the cabin below.

Hannah could not sleep; but she rested, quiet and happy. Even happiness could not make her physically strong; but she left all her days to come in God’s hands—to be many or few, as He thought best. The others fell sound asleep, one at her bosom, the other at her feet; but she lay wide awake, listening to the lap-lap of the water against the boat, and watching the night sky, so thick with stars. At length the moon came too, and looked in upon them like a sweet calm face, resembling a dead face, in its unchangeable peace; so much so, that when Hannah dropped at last into a confused doze, she dreamt it was the face of her sister Rosa, smiling down out of heaven upon them all.

When she woke it was no longer moonlight, but daylight, at least daybreak; for she could discern the dark outline of the man at the wheel, the only person on deck. The boat seemed to be passing, swiftly and silently as a phantom ship through a phantom ocean; she hardly knew whether she was awake or asleep, dead or alive, till she

felt the soft breathing of the child in her arms, and, with a passion of joy remembered all.

A few minutes after, Hannah, raising her head as high as she could without disturbing Rosie, saw a sight, which she never saw before, and never in all her life may see again, but will remember to the end of her days.

Just where sea and sky met, was a long, broad line of most brilliant amber, gradually widening and widening, as the sun lifted himself out of the water and shot his rays, in the form of a crown, right up into the still dark zenith. Then, as he climbed higher, every floating cloud—and the horizon seemed full of them—became of a brilliant rose-hue, until the whole heaven blazed with colour and light. In the midst of it all, dim as a dream, but with all these lovely tints flitting over it, Hannah saw, far in the distance, the line of the French shore.

It was her welcome to her new country and new life—the life which was truly like being born again into another world. She accepted the omen; and, clasping her child to her bosom, closed her eyes and praised God,

* * * * *

All this happened long ago, and Monsieur and Madame de la Rivière have never returned to England. They still inhabit the Château de Saint Roque, beloved and honoured far and wide in the land of their adoption; and finding after all that the human heart beats much alike, whether with French blood or English, and that there is something wonderfully noble and lovable about that fine old Norman race which (as Madame Arthenay long delighted in impressing upon her dear neighbours, and upon the many English friends who visited them in their pleasant foreign home) once came over and conquered, and civilised, us rude Saxons and Britons.

Whether the master and mistress of Saint Roque will ever return to England, or whether little Austin, the eldest of their three sons,—Rosie is still the only daughter—will ever become not only the heir of their French estates and name, but one day Sir Austin Rivers of the Moat-House, remains to be proved. At any rate, they mourn little after that old home, being so thoroughly happy in their new one—as those deserve to be who have sacrificed for one another almost everything except what they felt to be right. But they are happy, and what more can they or any one desire?

n
e
v
o

t
l
r
e
r
e
e

e
e
r

a
e
e
t
t
e
n
h
e

n
r,
e
s
n
v
r
o